

F1 Hamilton denied in French duel

AUTOSPORT

BRITAIN'S BEST MOTORSPORT WEEKLY

24 JUNE 2021

Max gets Red Bull revenge at Ricard

First lap error not enough to stop charging Verstappen in dramatic French GP



'We've got to dig deep and find some pace'

HAMILTON

'It will be like this for the rest of the season'

VERSTAPPEN

PLUS

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Advantage Red Bull as Mercedes fails to find an answer in France

Was Mercedes wrong to stick to a one-stop strategy in last weekend's French Grand Prix? Given the straightline speed of the Red Bull-Honda (a remarkable thing to see given where Honda was not so very long ago), it made sense to leave Lewis Hamilton out.

Time and again Hamilton has shown his ability to eke out tyre life, and the fact that Max Verstappen only retook the lead on the penultimate lap proved it was worth a try. What was strange was that the team also left Valtteri Bottas on old rubber.

Quite apart from the argument that splitting your strategies makes sense, one of the Finn's consistent weaknesses against Hamilton has been that Bottas burns through tyres much faster. He also stopped earlier than Hamilton at Paul Ricard and wanted to make a second pitstop. Surely it would have made sense to bring Bottas in and allow him to try to attack in the closing stages. It would have at least given him a chance against Sergio Perez, who did what Red Bull needed.

As Alex Kalinauckas shows in our report on page 16, it was an enthralling race that shows the 2021 championship battle is very close – and that Red Bull is slightly ahead. Both Verstappen and Hamilton have made mistakes this year, but Max's off-road excursion at the start did not cost him victory. Red Bull is now 4-3 ahead of Mercedes in terms of 2021 wins and the next two races are at the Red Bull Ring, where a power advantage could be very useful indeed.



Kevin Turner

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Chief Editor

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**NEXT WEEK
1 JULY**

F1, WRC and BTCC
Action from Styria, the
Safari Rally and Brands,
plus W Series

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PIRELLI BAKU INQUEST LEAVES TEAMS UNHAPPY



FORMULA 1

Formula 1 teams and drivers have hit out at a lack of transparency following Pirelli's tyre failures at the Azerbaijan Grand Prix after the Italian company's investigation deemed that no rules had been broken.

Pirelli launched an inquest into what caused Max Verstappen's Red Bull and Lance Stroll's Aston Martin to both suffer left-rear tyre failures in Baku in the 6 June race, having initially said that debris could be to blame. The company issued a statement ahead of last weekend's French Grand Prix making it clear that the failures were not caused by a production fault, wear or delamination, but instead were the result of a circumferential break on the inner sidewall of the tyres, rather than being the result of a cut from debris.

The statement suggested that the breaks in the sidewall were likely caused by the 'running condition of the tyre', with Pirelli F1 chief Mario Isola later explaining that Red Bull and Aston Martin had been running pressures lower than expected.

"When you have a lot of energy going into the tyres, with the pressure that is lower compared to the expectation, the result is that on the sidewall you have what we call standing waves," said Isola. "Standing waves are putting a lot of energy into the inside shoulder of the tyre. And, at a certain point, the tyre breaks. That is what happened, and the reason why we had this situation in Baku."

The FIA responded to the investigation by introducing more stringent checks on tyre pressures starting from last weekend's race at Paul Ricard. But

Isola made clear that Red Bull and Aston Martin had not broken any rules in Baku, meeting the required starting parameters for their tyre pressures.

Few were left satisfied by the explanations that were issued by Pirelli. Verstappen himself called the report "vague", but rejected any insinuations that Red Bull had acted incorrectly when preparing its tyres.

"If those limits are not correct, there is nothing we can do about it – we just follow what is possible within the rules," said Verstappen. "If that means that we have to go up on pressures, we will – everyone will go up on pressures. But they say they didn't have the correct measurements, but we gave it to them after the race and it was shown that we didn't do anything wrong there. And also, Aston Martin didn't do anything wrong. They cannot put the blame on us. I think they have to look at themselves."

But Verstappen's title rival, Mercedes star Lewis Hamilton, said he did not think that Pirelli was to blame. "More often than not, [it's] that the tyres are not being run at the pressures that are being asked," he said. "We didn't have a problem with our tyres. I think they've done a great job with the tyres this year. They're more robust than before and, in this particular instance, I don't think Pirelli are at fault."

That was a position shared by McLaren team boss Andreas Seidl, who backed Pirelli's "safe product" and questioned why there had not been greater transparency from the FIA over a safety matter. "What is a bit disappointing for us is that there is not more transparency in what actually happened, because it was a safety-critical topic," said Seidl. "Normally, that was

ABU DHABI TO CHANGE CIRCUIT LAYOUT FOR GP

FORMULA 1

Abu Dhabi's Yas Marina Circuit is set to be tweaked in a bid to boost overtaking for Formula 1's season finale in December.

The Abu Dhabi Grand Prix has regularly faced criticism about the quality of racing since it joined the calendar in 2009, but organisers have now approved plans to make track changes, with work set to begin this summer.

Two of the chicanes on the track are expected to be removed as part of the revised layout. The current Turns 5/6 chicane before the hairpin that leads onto the back straight will not be used, giving drivers more of a chance to pass into the hairpin or line up a move before the straight.

A more noticeable change is planned for the Turns 11-14 slow-speed complex, which will be replaced by a long left-hand corner similar to Spoon Curve at Suzuka. Sector 3 remains unchanged.

Saif Al Noaimi, acting CEO of Abu Dhabi Motorsports Management, said: "We've been looking at improving the racing on the track. We've been listening to our spectators, the fans, the drivers, F1 and the FIA, and we've been working on making some changes, exciting changes, this year to the layout of the track."

LUKE SMITH

Turn 7 will now have a faster, downhill approach



Verstappen crashed at high speed in the closing stages of the Azerbaijan Grand Prix



Isola faced questions at French GP event



a good practice in other cases in the past. With cases like that happening, there is transparency of what is happening, which didn't happen so far towards the teams. So that's a bit disappointing."

It led to a lengthy drivers' briefing involving Pirelli and the FIA on Friday evening at Paul Ricard, lasting around 90 minutes. It is understood that there was a division between the drivers over the findings.

Verstappen said on Saturday that he was "still not happy" with the explanation, believing it was "very confusing" for fans to understand. But a number of other drivers, including Ferrari's Carlos Sainz Jr, hailed the meeting as being "productive". The Spaniard showed sympathy for the challenge that Pirelli faces with the heavy modern cars.

"I feel in a way for Pirelli," said Sainz. "We try and keep comparing the product to years and years back. The fact that we are quicker than 10 to 15 years ago with 150kg extra on the car shows the amount of stress that is going through the tyres and what a challenge Pirelli have on their hands."

After seeing Stroll and Sebastian Vettel charge into the points in France on Sunday, Aston Martin F1 boss Otmar Szafnauer hoped it would silence any cheating accusations. "It's frustrating, especially when you know exactly what you're doing, and you're well within the rules, for other people who don't know what you're doing to accuse you," he said. "Hopefully that will silence them, but I can tell you that we've never done anything untoward. We've always followed both the FIA and the Pirelli prescriptions, and will continue to do so."

LUKE SMITH AND ADAM COOPER

Alpine snaps up Ocon for three more years

FORMULA 1

Esteban Ocon has become the latest Formula 1 driver to sew up his long-term future after signing a new three-year contract with Alpine.

Ocon has impressed through the early part of the 2021 season, prompting Alpine to open talks over a new deal upon the expiry of his current contract at the end of this year. The team announced last week that Ocon had signed a new three-year agreement, ensuring that he will remain with the squad until the end of the 2024 campaign.

"It's a weight off my shoulders, I would say, so I can only focus on the performance and what matters, now that the rest is secured," said Ocon.

"I feel good in the team, I

feel very well integrated, I feel the atmosphere is fantastic and that we are working very nicely. Obviously, we have a great chance of doing good things next year with the new regulations, so it's definitely a perfect place for me to stay."

Alpine CEO Laurent Rossi explained that he wanted a driver locked for the next regulation cycle. "We've seen enough of Esteban, we know he is good," he said. "I don't want to be here again, looking for another driver after two years. Recent past showed that it never really turns the right way – you have a good driver, you want to keep them."

Ocon was formerly a Mercedes young driver, and maintains connections to the German manufacturer, which serves as his management team. But his new Alpine contract does not contain



any exit clauses that would allow Mercedes to sign him in the next three years.

"He is a Mercedes-managed driver, that's about it," said

Rossi. "There's no such clause as Mercedes [to take] him out of the team. No, he stays with us for the next three years."

LUKE SMITH

Keep sport out of politics, urges Todt

FORMULA 1

FIA president Jean Todt says he supports Formula 1 going to countries that have been criticised for their human-rights records, and that he believes motorsport should stay out of politics.

The addition of Saudi Arabia to the 2021 F1 calendar has raised questions from human-rights groups, while other races such as the Bahrain, Chinese and Russian GPs have also proved controversial.

Todt said his road-safety role with the United Nations has given him the chance to meet human-rights experts who agreed that F1 should visit such countries.

"It's something which is very dear to my heart," said Todt, "and since now five years I'm very much involved with the UN as secretary general special envoy for road safety. If you see the high-level panel I made on road safety, you have Zeid Al Hussein, a former high commissioner for human rights.



You have Michelle Bachelet, who is the actual high commissioner for human rights. You have Filippo Grandi, the high commissioner for refugees. So in a way, it's a privilege I have to be discussing with them.

"Yesterday Stefano [Domenicali] came to visit me, and I had Jacques Toubon, former justice minister who has been until last year in charge of human rights in France, and I spoke with him about that. And everybody is in favour of having races wherever around the world. I mean, we are a sport. It's also something I discussed very often with the International Olympic Committee, because they have the same problem. And clearly we consider that sport should not be involved with politics."

Todt stressed that the FIA should talk to human-rights groups about the countries that races visit, and suggested that high-profile events give them a chance to highlight issues. "We need to engage with NGOs," he said. "And I mean good NGOs, like Human Rights Watch, who are proper people, to try to say, 'What kind of contribution we can give?'"

"You can interpret the way that it helps you. In my opinion, going in those countries gives also the chance for people who are negative about the country to speak, which probably they would not have otherwise. So, as I said, it's a lot of questions of interpretation. But, for me, I feel right."

ADAM COOPER



INDYCAR Kevin Magnussen joined his ex-Haas Formula 1 team-mate Romain Grosjean on the grid for his IndyCar Series debut at Road America last weekend. The Dane was called up to replace the injured Felix Rosenqvist at Arrow McLaren SP. Magnussen, who has moved to the US in 2021 to compete in the IMSA SportsCar Championship, qualified 21st and led briefly when he went on an alternative strategy, before the car lost power and he retired. **Photograph by Galstad/LAT**

Pure ETCR could headline all-electric events

PURE ETCR

The series director for the new Pure ETCR electric touring car series, which kicked off last weekend at Vallelunga, has said that the long-term plan is for all-electric racing weekends.

Eurosport Events' Xavier Gavory said: "Our goal in the

future is ideally to have 100% electric racing weekends, but today there are not so many electric racing series."

He added: "Pure ETCR is on the top of the pyramid that does not exist for the moment, but will in the future. We have a world-class championship, but we want regional

championships and national championships."

HOW QUICK ARE THEY?

It's tricky to be exact. Pure ETCR ran its 'Battles' on a short layout of Vallelunga on Saturday, but used the old, pre-extension two-mile circuit for free practice on Friday and for its Sunday

time trials and SuperFinals.

In free practice, Mikel Azcona lapped his Cupra in 1m20.685s, and is thought to have used the full 500kW of power. For the last Super Touring event at the track in 2000, Peter Kox took pole in his Honda Accord at 1m14.075s – that's a 6.610s difference, but Pure ETCR was using a chicane on the return straight to the stadium, potentially adding 3–4s.

At Thruxton, Jason Plato's Super Touring pole record, set in his Vauxhall in 2000, stands at 1m12.562s. The standard for the BTCC's current NGTC cars, set by Dan Cammish's Honda in 2020, is 1m15.201s – 2.639s adrift of the Super Touring pace.

Notwithstanding the provisos of the chicane and weather conditions, that indicates that Pure ETCR is close to NGTC.

MARCUS SIMMONS



P45 PURE ETCR ACTION



Bamber and Vanthoor for WeatherTech Porsche

LE MANS 24 HOURS

A pair of Porsche stars, both winners of the Le Mans 24 Hours, have been drafted into the WeatherTech Racing GTE Pro line-up for this year's edition of the French classic in August. Earl Bamber and Laurens Vanthoor have been loaned out by the German manufacturer to the US entrant to drive the Proton-run 911 RSR.

Two-time overall winner Bamber and Vanthoor, GTE Pro victor in 2018, will join Cooper MacNeil in the Proton Competition-run entry for the World Endurance Championship blue riband on 21-22 August. The duo know each other

well: they were team-mates in the Porsche factory team in the IMSA SportsCar Championship in 2018-20, winning the GT Le Mans title in 2019.

MacNeil described the driver roster assembled by the team as "a mature Le Mans line-up". "Between the three of us, we have 17 starts at Le Mans," he said. "That is a lot of miles and experience around that place."

Bamber, who is no longer classified by Porsche as a full factory driver, returns to Le Mans after a year's absence. Vanthoor, who remains a fully paid-up member of the works squad, will be making his fourth consecutive start in GTE Pro at the 24 Hours.

Meanwhile, the Maldonado family will

return to Le Mans two years after grand prix winner Pastor made the last of his two starts at the French enduro with the DragonSpeed LMP2 squad. His cousin Manuel has extended his deal with United Autosports to encompass Le Mans, where he will share one of the team's trio of ORECA-Gibson 07s with Nico Jamin and Jonathan Aberdein.

The 21-year-old, who raced in the BRDC British Formula 3 Championship in 2017-19, is driving for United alongside Jamin and Job van Uitert in the European Le Mans Series, after taking his first steps in sportscar racing with the team in LMP3 in the Asian Le Mans Series in February of this year.

GARY WATKINS

Foster back in hunt with Spa hat-trick of wins

EUROFORMULA OPEN

Ex-British Formula 3 ace Louis Foster has slashed the gap to Euroformula Open series leader Cameron Das to 19 points after taking a remarkable hat-trick of wins at Spa last weekend.

Foster claimed pole for the opening race in his CryptoTower Dallara-Spiess. He led at the start, while the fight for second between Das and Josh

Mason ended dramatically with a collision. That sent Das to the pits with a puncture, and the American later retired. Series debutant Christian Mansell, driving for EFO returnee Carlin, held second, but slipped to fifth. Nazim Azman came through to complete a CryptoTower 1-2, with Van Amersfoort Racing's Casper Stevenson third.

Foster took only two and a half laps to rise from sixth

on the reversed grid to take the lead of race two from Azman. The Malaysian clung onto second until Das, who started his Motopark car ninth, passed late on.

Foster stalled at the start of the finale, but battled back to second. Then a late safety car eradicated Das's advantage. A two-lap sprint remained, and Foster waited until the final tour to pass Das at Les Combes, with Azman finishing third.





COVID calendar caution for WEC

WEC

The World Endurance Championship will not revert to its traditional eight-race schedule next year. Series bosses reckon it will be too early for that in the face of the continuing COVID crisis and its economic impact.

Pierre Fillon, president of WEC promoter the Automobile Club de l'Ouest, and series chief executive officer Frederic Lequien believe that retaining this year's downsized six-race calendar, or possibly going up one to seven events, will be more prudent for 2022. "Due to the COVID situation and the economic situation related to COVID, I think it is too early to imagine to come back to eight races," said Fillon. "I think it will be six or seven; we are discussing that."

This year's calendar was originally split half and half between races in Europe and races outside, prior to the replacement of the Sebring 1000 Miles with the Portimao 8 Hours. There is a clear desire to go back to Sebring to race in support of the 12 Hours IMSA SportsCar Championship classic, but any additional race next year would be

in Europe, stressed Lequien. "It is not only a question of budget; it is a question of making the calendar safe because of travel restrictions," he explained.

Asked whether Silverstone, which hosted a WEC round every year between 2012 and 2019, could make a return, Fillon said: "Everything is open — Silverstone is a fantastic place." He added that the travel complications caused by Brexit would not be an obstacle to the Silverstone WEC fixture being revived after an absence of two years.

The Algarve circuit near Portimao, which hosted the second round of the 2021 series this month, also appears to be a candidate for the possible extra race. "It is a very good place, a nice track; the drivers love this place, and it's in Europe," said Fillon.

The calendar of the current iteration of the WEC relaunched in 2012 has been made up of eight races in all bar two of its seasons prior to the current campaign. This included the so-called 'superseason' in 2018-19, which encompassed two editions of the Le Mans 24 Hours. It briefly expanded to nine events in 2016 and 2017.

GARY WATKINS

IN THE HEADLINES

GLICKENHAUS SWITCHEROO

Ryan Briscoe will be replaced by Franck Mailleux in the #709 Glickenhaus-Pipo 007 LMH alongside Romain Dumas and Richard Westbrook for next month's Monza round of the World Endurance Championship. The move is designed to ensure that each of the seven Glickenhaus Racing drivers race the team's new Le Mans Hypercar before a decision is made on the final line-up for the Le Mans 24 Hours in August. Pipo Derani, Olivier Pla and Gustavo Menezes will race the team's debuting #708 entry in Italy.

ZASADA, 91, ENTERS SAFARI

Three-time European Rally champion Sobieslaw Zasada will step up to the World Rally Championship this week on the Safari Rally in Kenya, at the wheel of an M-Sport Poland Ford Fiesta Rally3 car. Nothing unusual about that — except he's 91, and his ERC titles came in 1966, 1967 and 1971... Zasada has already contested the Safari eight times, with a best result of second in 1972 in a Porsche 911S. "I'm going back because I'm very curious to see what this rally looks like in its present form," he said. "It's about the challenge."

DAKAR IN WORLD SERIES

The FIA and Dakar Rally promoter ASO have announced a Cross-Country World Championship for 2022. It will kick off with the Dakar, followed by up to four other events. Cross-country does have an FIA World Cup, but manufacturers and drivers have usually dipped in and out of events to prepare for the Dakar.

SEOUL IS ON FOR 2022

Formula E has confirmed a 13-14 August 2022 date for the much-delayed maiden visit to South Korean capital Seoul on a track around the 1988 Olympics venue. The fixture was initially slated for the second half of the 2019-20 season, but was an early COVID victim, ditto its May 2021 slot.

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DUTCH PAIR PUTS SAUCY WAY OUT FRONT

FORMULA REGIONAL

Gregoire Saucy continued his march towards the Formula Regional European Championship by Alpine title with two more wins at Zandvoort last weekend.

The Swiss dominated the weekend, taking both poles into the bargain. In the first race he lined up alongside ART Grand Prix team-mate Gabriele Mini. While Saucy (below) got away to lead throughout, Mini used the new banking at the Hugenholtz hairpin to fend off an attack from Hadrien David. A late safety car gave R-ace GP driver David another shot, but Mini held onto second, with Mercedes F1 junior Paul Aron fourth in his Prema Powerteam car.

Mari Boya (Van Amersfoort Racing) was the big loser at the safety car restart, and dropped behind Franco Colapinto (MP Motorsport) and Isack Hadjar (R-ace) in the battle for fifth.

Once again Mini lined up alongside Saucy for Sunday's race, but he could not prevent Colapinto from sweeping around the outside of him at the first corner, and the Argentinian held onto second for the duration.

Francesco Pizzi took a big step forward in form. The VAR driver initially held fourth, only for Arden's Finnish talent William Alatalo to make an audacious move around the outside at the Tarzan hairpin on the second lap to wrest the position. Pizzi thereafter held off Kas Haverkort (MP) and Aron for fifth.

Alex Quinn had a bad weekend. He was 10th in the opener, and retired on the first lap of Sunday's race.



FORMULA REGIONAL



Swedish rallycross titans unite

WORLD RALLYCROSS

Triple World Rallycross champion Johan Kristoffersson has switched to an Audi S1 and Mattias Ekstrom's EKS JC team in his bid to win a fourth crown this year.

Kristoffersson, who has campaigned only Volkswagen machinery in rallycross since his debut in the discipline in 2013, will spearhead the effort of EKS JC, an amalgamation of Ekstrom's EKS team and Joel Christoffersson's JC Raceteknik squad. The operation won last year's WRX teams' title with Ekstrom and Robin Larsson, and will field Belgian former Blancpain GT champion Enzo Ide alongside Kristoffersson in 2021.

Kristoffersson's three WRX drivers' titles have come in Volkswagen Motorsport-built Polos, the first two with Petter Solberg's PSRX Volkswagen Sweden team, then last year within the family Kristoffersson Motorsport squad.

"First of all, I'm very pleased that I can contest a full World RX season, and to do so with a new team is like a new challenge

for me," said 32-year-old Kristoffersson. "EKS JC know how to win races and championships, and after our first two test days we saw that we could learn and gain from each other. Joel Christoffersson and the whole team are very passionate and motivated to achieve the goal of defending my drivers' title and, together with Enzo, also the teams' title."

Ekstrom, who was Kristoffersson's closest rival for the 2020 WRX crown, said. "If you can't beat him, join him – it's as simple as that. I have had many great battles with Johan and I think everyone can agree he has a unique skillset, so for me he is a perfect fit for EKS JC's 2021 campaign."

Kristoffersson, who leads the Extreme E series with Molly Taylor after the first two rounds, has already tested the EKS-built S1, initially at a rain-soaked Holjes in Sweden. His father Tommy previously raced Audis in the European Rallycross Championship through the 1990s, and claimed a final victory at his home circuit, Arvika, in 1998.

HAL RIDGE





DTM TROPHY There was a British 1-2 in the opening race of the 2021 edition of the DTM Trophy at Monza last Saturday. BMW M4 driver Ben Green (leading in pic) headed home the Mercedes-AMG GT4 of William Tregurtha (third in pic), who emerged from a spirited tussle with Green's team-mate, reigning DTM Esports champion Moritz Lohner, who was having his first real-life car race. Tregurtha was second again on Sunday, this time behind Michael Schrey's BMW, after on-the-road winner Tim Heinemann (Aston Martin) was penalised. Green drove to seventh following an early trip through the gravel. Tregurtha leads the standings. **Photograph by DTM**

Gresini from Aprilia to Ducati

MOTOGP

Gresini Racing will field Ducati machinery for the 2022 MotoGP season after agreeing a two-year deal with the Italian marque to become one of its satellite squads.

Gresini, which has run Aprilia's official factory entry since 2015, formerly fielded Honda machinery between 1997 and 2014. The team announced late last year that it would be parting ways with Aprilia, which will enter MotoGP in 2022 as a standalone factory squad.

Ducati had already been in discussions with Gresini leader Fausto Gresini before his death in February from COVID-19.

Gresini will field Moto2 race winner Fabio Di Giannantonio, who currently races for its Moto2 team, and current Avintia Ducati MotoGP rider Enea Bastianini, who

competed with Gresini in Moto3 from 2014-16. Both will have 2021-spec bikes.

Ducati will expand to eight bikes for the 2022 season for the first time since 2018, with Valentino Rossi's VR46 team set to partner with the marque. Although yet to be officially confirmed as Autosport went to press, VR46 will have a factory-spec bike for Luca Marini and a GP21 for Marco Bezzecchi, who is set to step up from the VR46 Moto2 team for 2022.

Rossi's squad will take the place of Avintia, which confirmed last year that 2021 would be its final season in MotoGP.

The VR46/Ducati tie-up paves the way for Petronas SRT to continue with Yamaha, which had offered M1s to Rossi's team for next year, while neither Suzuki nor Aprilia will have a satellite squad in 2022.

LEWIS DUNCAN

IN THE HEADLINES

SCHMITZ HONOURED

The Nurburgring has named the left-hander that leads from the Grand Prix circuit onto the Nordschleife the Sabine-Schmitz-Kurve, in honour of the 'Queen of the Ring' who died earlier this year from cancer at the age of 51. Its official inauguration will take place at the NLS round on 11 September. Schmitz was a two-time winner of the circuit's 24 Hours race.

MILLROY, CARROLL POLES

UK drivers Ollie Millroy and Adam Carroll took a pole position apiece for last weekend's International GT Open round at Spa, but only Millroy took a podium finish: third in race one with Brendan Iribe in their Inception Racing McLaren. Crashes and safety cars meant Millroy couldn't build a lead in the first stint on Saturday. After the pitstops, it was Faisal Al Zubair in the Lechner Racing Porsche started by Andy Soucek who led to the finish. Carroll led the first stint on Sunday in the Balfe Motorsport Audi, which Shaun Balfe took to fifth. The VSR Lamborghini of Michele Beretta and Frederik Schandorff won.

YOUNG LOSES TO OLDIE

Northern Irishman Jack Young's strong TCR season continued at Zandvoort last weekend. He put his Brutal Fish Racing Honda on pole for the TCR Europe round at Zandvoort, and led until he was overhauled by local veteran Tom Coronel's Comtoyou Audi on lap eight of 13. Young finished second, and was ninth in the reversed-grid race after recovering from an early trip into the gravel. That race was won by Franco Girolami's Honda.

CHOVET IS LATE SUB

Asian Formula 3 runner-up Pierre-Louis Chovet, who lost his FIA F3 seat to Johnathan Hoggard when his backer fell out, was on the grid after all at Paul Ricard last weekend. Chovet replaced Laszlo Toth, who had tested positive for COVID-19, at Campos Racing.

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FP3 1100

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RACE 1400

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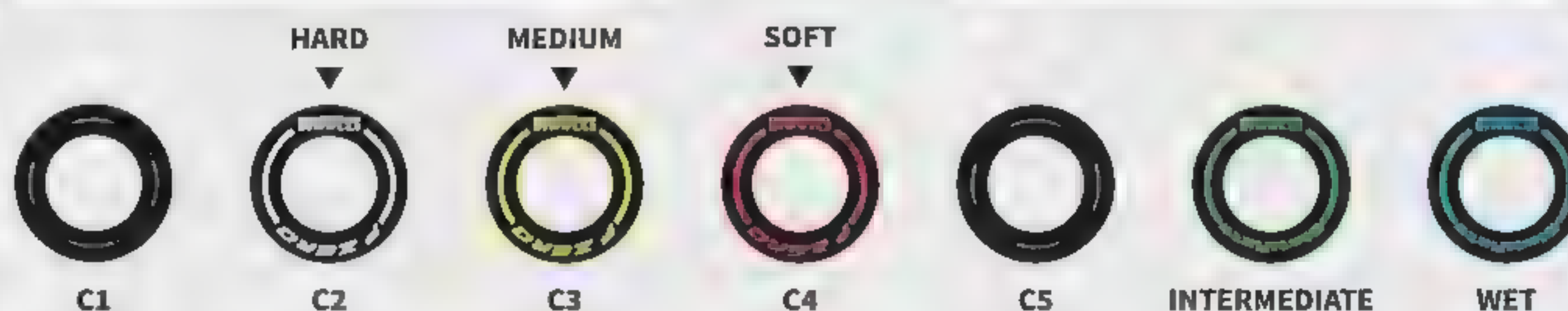
SKY SPORTS F1

BBC RADIO 5 LIVE

HIGHLIGHTS

CHANNEL 4 1830

TYRE ALLOCATION



CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS

Drivers

1	Verstappen	131
2	Hamilton	119
3	Perez	84
4	Norris	76
5	Bottas	59

Constructors

1	Red Bull	215
2	Mercedes	178
3	McLaren	110
4	Ferrari	94
5	AlphaTauri	45



RACE STATS

Previous Red Bull Ring winners

2020	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2020	Valtteri Bottas	Mercedes
2019	Max Verstappen	Red Bull
2018	Max Verstappen	Red Bull
2017	Valtteri Bottas	Mercedes
2016	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2015	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes
2014	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes
2003	Michael Schumacher	Ferrari
2002	Michael Schumacher	Ferrari



Best results

Hamilton	1st x 2
Bottas	1st x 2
Verstappen	1st x 2
Raikkonen	2nd x 2
Leclerc	2nd x 2
Vettel	2nd x 1
Norris	3rd x 1
Ricciardo	3rd x 1
Sainz	5th x 1
Alonso	5th x 1



Can Red Bull now win anywhere?

After the team's victory at Paul Ricard — its third in a row — there's a strong momentum building, promising a championship fight that will run to the wire

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

This circuit, it's been such a stronghold for Mercedes over recent years. If we can beat them here, then really we can beat them anywhere." Red Bull team principal Christian Horner was pretty bullish ahead of the 2021 French Grand Prix. And he had every right to be. Max Verstappen had just inflicted a first qualifying defeat on the Black Arrows at a track where Mercedes had taken two poles, won both races and led 105 of the 106 racing laps since Paul Ricard returned to the Formula 1 calendar in 2018.

The first two French GPs since 2008 were awful. But the race just gone was very good. Not an all-time classic, but compared to what had come before it was a thriller. And this time it was Horner's squad that triumphed in a race upended by a bold strategy call. Before last weekend, Red Bull's results at Paul Ricard were second and fourth in 2018, and fourth and 10th a year later.

So, with Verstappen's victory ahead of Lewis Hamilton secured, how does Horner's pre-race claim stack up when considering the rest of the 2021 campaign? This is far from the first sign that Red Bull is a genuine title threat this year — Mercedes has been saying so since testing. After those three days in Bahrain, Red Bull claimed pole for the season opener (which it should really have won), triumphed in the wet at Imola, and split the two Mercedes in Portugal. Although Mercedes has six wins in the past eight years in Bahrain, the track is not exactly a fortress for the team, as the

"This is a statement result, Mercedes defeated where it was previously untouchable"

abrasive surface causes so much difficulty for the rear tyres. Imola and Algarve are relatively open, form-wise, with both of F1's leading teams showing strongly across the races held at these venues in six months straddling 2020-21.

But Barcelona is something else entirely, with Mercedes boasting a near-perfect record in the V6 era (spoiled by *that* crash in 2016), which it extended with Hamilton's charging, two-stopping win nearly seven weeks ago. Yet Red Bull was very much in contention and might have won had both its cars been in the lead fight. That Mercedes stronghold was very much shaken.

At that event, F1 2021's flexi-wing saga kicked off, with wing performance a key part of the title fight so far, especially at the two street circuits that preceded Paul Ricard. Both teams have swapped wing designs and downforce variations around in a bid to gain an

edge or solve car weaknesses at certain tracks.

Red Bull has now secured a real statement result, by defeating Mercedes where it was previously untouchable, and doing so on the weekend where new wing-deflection tests were introduced (both teams still tested different wings and settings throughout Paul Ricard practice) and after its Baku tyre blowout misery. In doing so it netted a first F1 victory hat-trick since 2013.

Mercedes is currently just ahead in Autosport's supertimes calculations, which are impacted by the Monaco and Baku Q3 red flags stopping both it and Red Bull from challenging for pole, but it reckons Red Bull maintains a slight pure-pace advantage. Verstappen's Q3 errors at Imola (running wide) and Algarve (track limits) also hinder Red Bull's true supertimes position. "I think we're lacking a bit in qualifying," says Mercedes director of trackside engineering Andrew Shovlin.

Red Bull is combining pace with strong development within the very limited scope of the 2021 rules, particularly with its varying downforce packages. A lower-downforce approach with the rear wing introduced in Baku helped Verstappen keep the Mercedes drivers at bay during the critical early laps on the hard tyres in what would become his second of three stints last weekend. Now it heads to home ground in Austria, where Mercedes' historical form is patchy. Red Bull is also the most recent winner at Silverstone, and the Hungaroring's technical nature should favour it too.

After the summer break, Red Bull's progress will face further key tests at Spa and Monza, as these have typically started a late-season run in which Hamilton has been amazing. But, in between, the power of a first home race for Verstappen at the returning Dutch GP should not be underestimated. And, after the final European triple-header, Sochi shares track characteristics with the Baku circuit where Red Bull dominated pre-tyre blowouts.

Speculation over how the rest of season will even ultimately be scheduled is unwise given the fluctuating nature of the pandemic. But, even with Singapore gone and uncertainty surrounding its own stronghold events in Mexico and Brazil, nothing on the run-in should scare Red Bull now. It won't have it easy — Mercedes and Hamilton are too good and too close to winning the races that Red Bull has taken so far — but something is building. A prolonged, two-team title fight is finally likely to play out over the rest of the season.

Red Bull has the momentum. Its car tweaks are working. It's pressuring Mercedes into mistakes. Now it must press home every advantage. It needs Sergio Perez to continue delivering strong performances in the lead fight, and it needs the clinical Verstappen of lap 52 of the French GP to be dominant, and not let the wayward Verstappen of the first corners reappear... ❧

P16 FRENCH GP REPORT



A competitor who enters the shut pitlane can only do so for a safety related reason. Failure to comply means disqualification

HOWARD BAYLISS

Marshal's solution to safety car chaos

Your column suggests a solution to safety car chaos (Club Autosport, 17 June). However, I believe a better version is this: just before the safety car joins the track the pitlane is shut. Once the safety car is withdrawn and all race cars have passed the flag stand, the pitlane is reopened. Any competitor in the pits at the time of closing is allowed to rejoin at the rear of the train as the cars pass the pit exit.

A competitor who enters the shut pitlane can only do so for a safety related reason. Failure to comply means disqualification.

A version of this procedure was successfully used in world sportscar races run in the 1970s and 1980s.

If someone's got a copy of the old yellow book of FISA regs I'm certain it's in there.

Howard Bayliss (motorsport marshal since 1967)

By email

Interesting idea, not sure about the execution

After reading your interesting preview of Pure ETCR (17 June), I decided to tune in to see how things panned out. Unfortunately, with the needlessly complicated format, a reliance on broadcasting gimmicks, and a lack of on-track action for much of the event, I'm not sure I'll be coming back. Perhaps the FIA's Electric GT series will bring us something more entertaining in 2023?

Tom Elliott

By email

See World of Sport, page 45 – ed

Archive stirs memories of halcyon days

I always enjoy your From the Archive feature, and particularly so from a couple of weeks ago with F2 from Thruxton (10 June).

What a great series that was – large, competitive grids, close racing and above all unlimited accessibility to the teams and drivers via paddock transfers.

As a young boy, Easter weekend was eagerly awaited in order to watch at first hand the cars being prepared under



awnings, and mixing both with the established stars as well as with those drivers of tomorrow.

Autographs and photos were easy to gather and those memories still vividly resonate today.

Hugh Wroth

Marlborough, Wiltshire

Here's one-time Formula 1 world championship podium finisher Reine Wisell (above) waiting in parc ferme in his Lotus 69 ahead of the 1971 BARC 200 at Thruxton – ed

Time for Toto to turn up the heat?

Might we now see Toto Wolff's renowned relaxed, empowering and facilitative management style become rather more taut?

Graeme Innes-Johnstone

Elland, West Yorks

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VERSTAPPEN'S 'SWEET' RED BULL REVENGE

*Last month in Spain Mercedes beat its rival with a strategic sleight of hand.
So in France there was no hesitation when the chance came to turn the tables*

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
IMAGES

STAT

12

Verstappen now leads
Hamilton by 12 points
after his third win
of 2021



“W

e just didn't want to be in the same position as in Barcelona.” Last month in Spain, Christian Horner's Red Bull squad suffered a déjà vu defeat against Mercedes, as Lewis Hamilton charged late on to make a perfect, unexpected and aggressive two-stop strategy work to win a race in which he'd sacrificed track position. At the 2021 French Grand Prix, Horner's team was not caught out again, as Max Verstappen reversed the late-race drama and

ultimately triumphed in an engaging contest that was also laced with several familiar themes from other races this season.

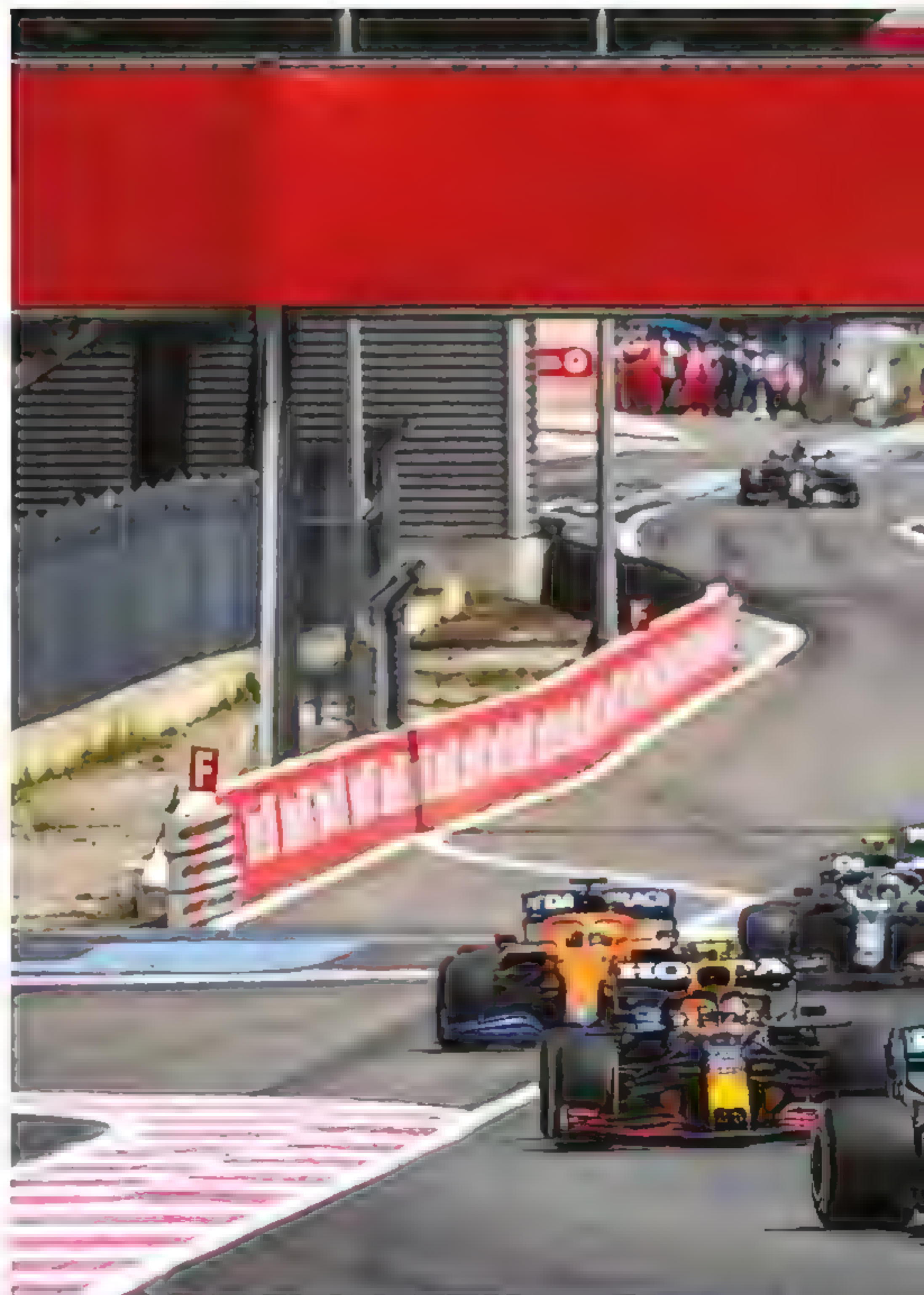
But Verstappen was “caught out” in the opening corners at Paul Ricard. When the lights went out, he did not need to defend on the run down to Turn 1 as he led Hamilton off the line. But just as Verstappen went from exiting the left-hander to positioning his car left again for the quickly ensuing Turn 2 right, it all went wrong.

“I don't think I braked too late,” he later explained. “I just lost a lot of grip suddenly. It was not one moment; it was like three or four. I lost the rear and had to go off the track.”

Verstappen's attempts to catch the slide put him on the inside of Turn 2, where he didn't go around the two arrow-marked blocks deep in the runoff, as required in the race director's event notes. But the stewards did not investigate this outcome because “it would have been physically impossible to get to that point”, according to F1 race director Michael Masi, who also said it was deemed that Verstappen had “slowed and lost a position and rejoined in a safe manner”, and therefore no further action was necessary.

As Verstappen slipped off the road, Hamilton roared through Turn 2 and took an unexpected lead, with Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas chasing hard in third place.

Horner reckoned “the tailwind down to Turn 1 was so strong it caught Max out”, and indeed the Dutchman felt throughout the first stint that he was struggling to keep his RB16B under control at this point, as well as at the corners crossing that tailwind further on in



Emirates FLY BETTER



“FOR THE FIRST FIVE OR 10 LAPS THE CAR WAS PRETTY MUCH UNDRIVEABLE WITH THE WIND”

the first sector, before Turn 6, which takes the drivers back on themselves and onto the Mistral Straight.

As his title rival was somewhat flailing, Hamilton looked to be in total command up front. He'd come across the line at the end of lap one with a 1.5-second lead, and over the race's next 16 laps he edged away from Verstappen at a rate of 0.1s per lap. But Hamilton was in fact struggling, with his car feeling “just inconsistent all the way around the lap”.

The conditions on race day were markedly different from the rest of the weekend. Rain on Sunday morning had washed away the rubber previously put down, and track temperatures were 10 degrees lower than they had been in the sun-soaked, critical, FP2 race preparation practice session on Friday afternoon. Come Sunday, cloud cover, strong, swirling winds and the lost rubber were all playing havoc with the drivers' tyre management tactics. Ahead of the opening pitstops, this was really hurting Red Bull.

As Verstappen lost ground against Hamilton, his medium-compound starting tyres were wearing out, not only because the unexpected gusts were causing the car to slide, but because of the typical dirty-air effect when following the leader. Team-mate Sergio Perez was also struggling in the conditions – his Red Bull was running fourth, but had rather disappeared from the lead fight.

During the laps when Hamilton built his lead to a maximum of 3.1s, Perez had fallen back to 10.4s behind the leader, unable to match the top trio's times. “For the first five or 10 laps the car was pretty much undriveable with the wind,” Perez explained. “We obviously ran less downforce today, so it was pretty hard to keep up behind. But then the wind was getting calmer and the track was getting better, and I started to pick up my rhythm.”

Red Bull left Perez out until lap 24. But, critically, although he'd lost time to the leaders in the early laps, he was not completely out of position and contention for the podium places, as he had been in Spain. This time, his higher placing took away a relatively simple (if risky) strategy choice for Red Bull's rival, and would later allow his team to make the race-winning strategy call.

But before that moment arrived, Mercedes made several small mistakes, which added up considerably. Bottas had pleased his team with his pace across the opening stint – he was just 5.5s behind Hamilton after 16 laps, and generally remained just out of DRS >>



threat behind Verstappen. But on lap 12 he had made a critical error.

The Finn locked up at the near-90-degree right of Turn 3 and skated straight on, cutting the inside of the Turn 4 left (this was also assessed by the FIA, but it was deemed that the off was punishment enough), shipping 0.9s to Verstappen on that tour. But it was the damage he'd done to his right-front medium that would prove costly.

Charles Leclerc and Ferrari kicked off the pitstop phase by coming in at the end of lap 14, which was four laps earlier than had been estimated ahead of the race. Mercedes also had to come in earlier than it ideally wanted to because of Bottas's lock-up and ensuing flatspot. The vibrations he picked up combined with the problem all the drivers had unexpectedly been having since the opening exchanges: the left-front tyre graining, exacerbated at long corners such as Turn 11, caused by the cooler temperatures and refreshed track surface.

"[The vibration] was starting to get to levels where we will box the car for reliability concerns," said Mercedes trackside engineering director Andrew Shovlin. "The focus was on making sure that we

didn't have an issue on track with him, so that was why we did it."

Bottas pitted at the end of lap 17 to switch to the hard tyres, when Hamilton held a 3.1s lead over Verstappen. Red Bull reacted by bringing its lead car in a lap later, with Verstappen rejoining comfortably in front of Bottas, who'd been 2.7s behind at the end of the lap before he stopped.

This was something of a surprise, given that Leclerc had been able to jump three places and run a net fifth, having been seventh before stopping, thanks to a powerful undercut given his early stop. But Mercedes was in for a bigger shock yet.

"WE HAD A SOLID THREE-SECOND GAP TO PROTECT AGAINST THE UNDERCUT, AND THAT WASN'T ENOUGH"



Hamilton came in the lap after Verstappen — two laps after Bottas had "triggered the pitstops at the front of the grid", according to Shovlin. His 2.2s service was 0.1s quicker than the Red Bull's but, when the Mercedes was racing back up to speed at the pitlane exit, Verstappen was suddenly bearing down on the seven-time champion.

They raced towards Turn 1, where Verstappen atoned for his earlier error by striving to reach the turn-in point just ahead. The lead, suddenly and somewhat shockingly, was back in the Dutchman's command.

Mercedes still doesn't know what went so wrong, but it's clear that it badly underestimated the undercut's power. Hamilton felt he was "definitely down on my in-lap" as "my tyres were getting worse", and this translates into a 1m58.684s in-lap compared to Verstappen's 1m58.099s and a loss of 0.5s. But that still does not explain how the gap Mercedes thought meant it was "safe from the undercut", according to

QUALIFYING

SUTTON



Shovlin, had disappeared. “We can [only] account for about two and a half seconds of the three seconds,” Shovlin added.

It’s just possible that hitting the gas fractionally later than Verstappen at the pitlane-exit speed-limit line cost Hamilton, who Mercedes had told would have a 1.5s lead and then had to urgently update him that his rival was alongside heading into Turn 1. There was also a 0.4s difference between their overall time spent in the pitlane in Verstappen’s favour, but the undercut underestimation had made the crucial difference, as Verstappen put in an out-lap that was 0.269s quicker than Bottas had just managed.

“We had a solid three-second gap to protect against the undercut, and that wasn’t enough,” Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff later reflected. “And from then on, we were on the back foot.”

There was indeed more pain to come for Mercedes, but its decision not to bring Hamilton in the lap after Bottas stopped, which surprised Red Bull, was because it was unsure how its opposition was itself reacting to the first, early Black Arrows stop. In the end, by making sure it “went for it” with Verstappen to cover Bottas’s undercut and try to threaten Hamilton, as Horner explained, Red Bull’s timing paid off handsomely.

Now, though, Red Bull had another tough decision to ace. Hamilton and Bottas were all over Verstappen during the initial laps on the hards, with the Dutchman getting cross with race engineer Gianpiero Lambiase for not giving him the gap to the hotly pursuing world champion when he felt he needed it each time running onto the Mistral Straight – to understand if he had to defend approaching the Turns 8/9 chicane. Lambiase ordered his charge to calm down and weather the storm.

For the first 10 laps after Hamilton’s stop, the gap between the two leaders never grew beyond 1.2s and was generally well under that. But here, once it was clear that Hamilton was not simply going to storm back into the race lead, Mercedes suggested he think about preserving his rubber for a late-race attack, likely remembering Red Bull’s late-stint rear-tyre woe at Barcelona. >>



Formula 1 qualifying and red-flag interruptions seem impossible to separate of late. But at the French Grand Prix, the suspensions came at the opposite end of qualifying compared to Monaco and did not spoil all three, as in Baku. But they still proved costly to some drivers.

Yuki Tsunoda lost his AlphaTauri’s rear going too tight over the kerbs at the first corner and went backwards into the tyre barrier behind Turn 2. That led to a 10-minute delay and, with 22 seconds of the restarted Q1 remaining, it was then stopped early after Mick Schumacher also went off backwards into the wall – this time at the long, ever-tightening Turn 6 right that was being policed for track-limits violations. His crash preserved his first F1 career Q2 progression, although he’d play no part in it. That conclusion did cost Aston Martin’s Lance Stroll, who had lost his first lap – good enough for a Q1 top-10 – for running too wide in Turn 6 and had abandoned his first attempt to set a time in the final minutes of qualifying’s first section. The red flag on his last lap dumped him out in 19th, without a representative time set.

Once the top 10 all made it through to Q3 on the medium tyres in Q2 – a change required for the best race strategy that cost Alpine’s Esteban Ocon, who was knocked out in 11th by 0.121s – they returned to softs for the pole shootout.

Here, Max Verstappen reigned supreme. He’d laid down a marker by topping FP3 by 0.747s over Valtteri Bottas, but things were naturally

closer in qualifying. On his first Q3 run he delivered a 1m30.325s, which put him 0.386s clear of Lewis Hamilton, suddenly rising to the fore having been the second Mercedes throughout practice. Hamilton had taken a set-up decision to put his W12 essentially back to where it had been at the start of Friday practice after being “really uncomfortable with the balance”, and “making all these changes back and forth” throughout the weekend’s first three sessions, and on the final fliers he ended up bettering that time. But Verstappen had already put it out of reach with a 1m29.990s, 0.258s clear of the world champion.

“It’s a general understanding of the track,” Verstappen said of his gains between Q3 laps. “We did two runs with the medium in Q2, so then you go out in Q3 on the soft and I think you’re always a tiny bit under the potential in your first run. And then, on the second run, you know where you left a bit of lap time so you’re just gaining on every corner, just a tiny bit. That’s where the lap time comes from.”

“ON THE SECOND RUN, YOU KNOW WHERE YOU LEFT A BIT OF LAP TIME SO YOU’RE GAINING ON EVERY CORNER”

Returning to Horner's words referring to the Spanish GP, that race's outcome was firmly on his team's mind too. By lap 28, "Max was being pushed really hard, he wasn't able to be managing the tyres", according to Horner, and so Red Bull weighed up what it thought Mercedes was doing too: possibly switching to a two-stopper.

"The feedback from the car was that he didn't think you'd get to the end," Horner explained. "So, the strategist presented the options in front of me and said, 'We have got nothing to lose.' So we pulled the trigger."

And so Verstappen did what no French GP winner had done since the event returned to the F1 calendar in 2018 – he came in for a second stop. At the end of lap 32, Red Bull fitted a used set of mediums and set him out on a charge to pass three cars and close an 18.2s gap to the first place he'd just given up.

Here, Perez's position was crucial. Although Hamilton felt "the only option I really had was to stay out" and not immediately convert to a two-stopper because "again he was undercutting me, so he would come out ahead and I wouldn't be able to get past as they were too quick on the straights", Mercedes had actually already decided that wasn't an option.

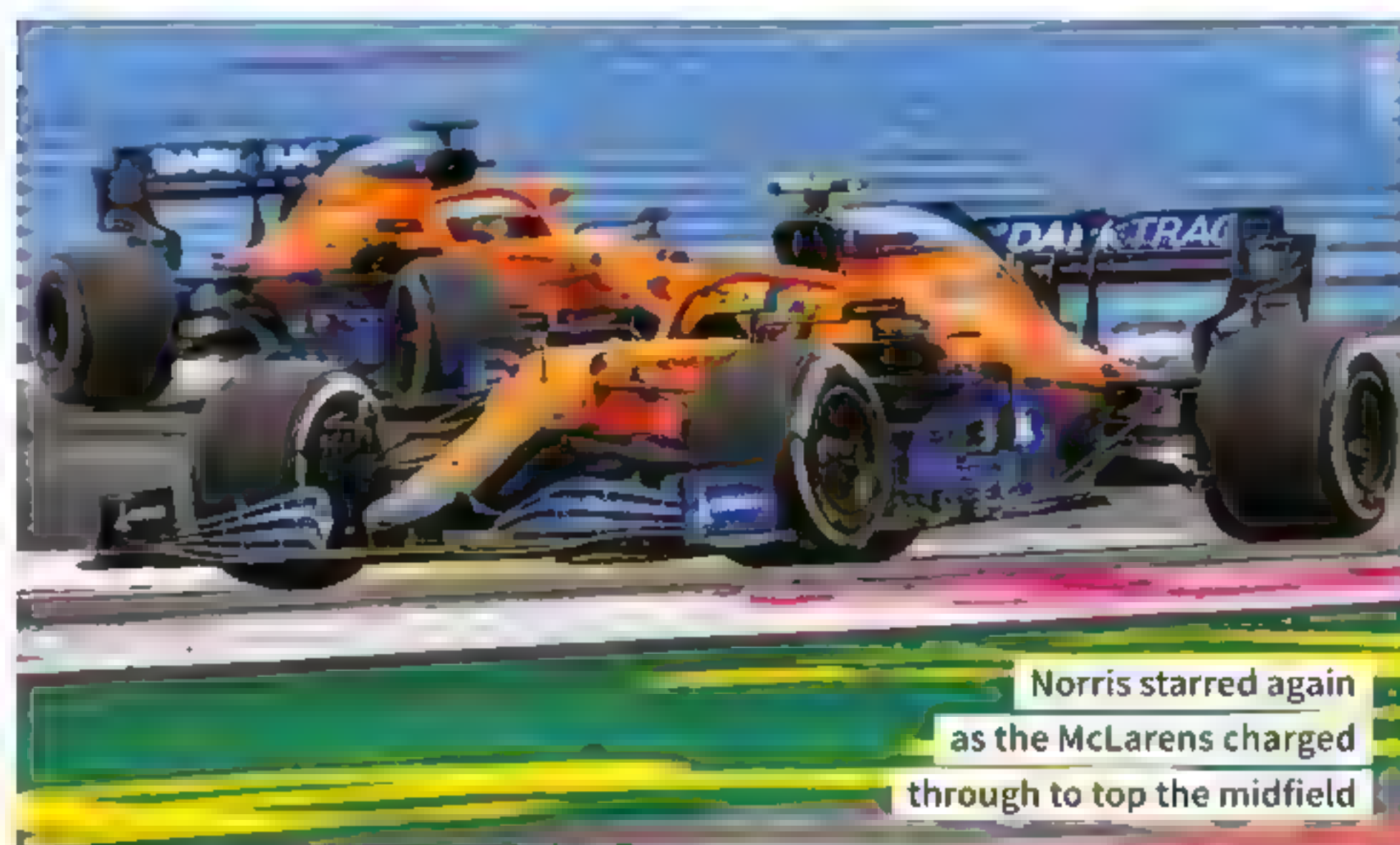
"Converting Lewis to a two-stopper wouldn't have worked the same, because Max only just got us and we would have had to get through Sergio," Shovlin explained.

Naturally, this was no problem for the Red Bull. Verstappen's pace after his second stop was scintillating, as he trimmed roughly two seconds out of Hamilton's lead on each of the first five times past the pits (on lap 37 he took 2.6s). On lap 35, he'd arrived at Perez's rear, with the Mexican playing the team game to perfection by getting off the gas between Turns 10 and 11. Considering Perez was also on a different sort of charge, attempting to make his tyre-life offset advantage pay versus Bottas, this was great teamwork from Red Bull, for which Verstappen was grateful.

But battling past Bottas was by no means a given. Once Verstappen had moved up to third, Bottas was 2.9s adrift of Hamilton, having slipped back from a six-lap stint in DRS range of his team-mate following the Briton's stop. Eight laps after passing Perez, Verstappen was within a second of reclaiming second, which was now 4.2s adrift of Hamilton, and he didn't need a second go at getting ahead.

Verstappen closed in rapidly as the pair ran down the first half of the Mistral Straight. The Red Bull benefited from its Honda engine's power punch, DRS and the lower overall downforce level the team had opted to race with after trialling two different rear-wing specifications in Friday practice.

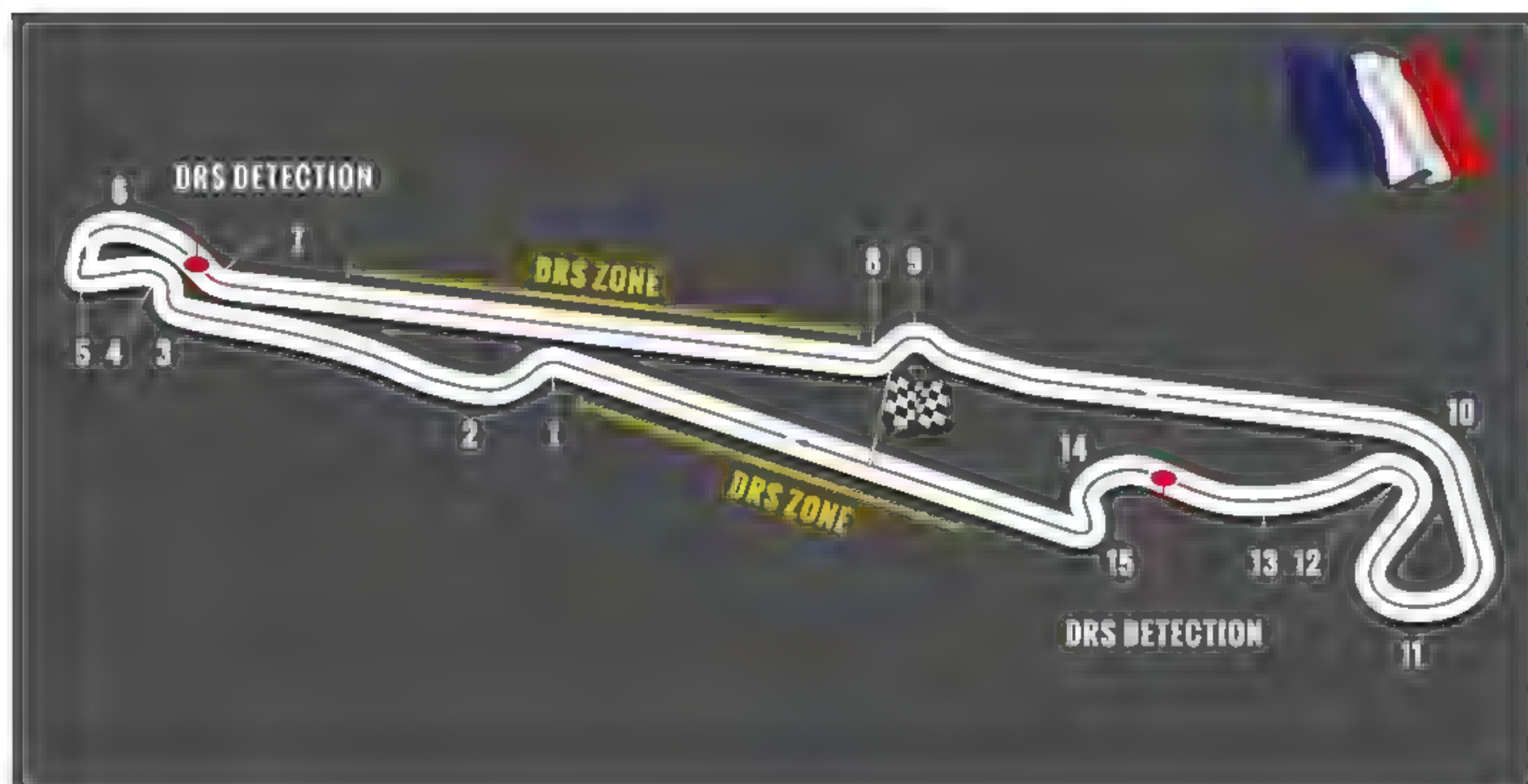
Bottas defended the inside line into the Turn 8 left part of the



chicane that divides Paul Ricard's main straight in modern F1's configuration, but this meant he went deep past the apex and lost momentum running through the Turn 9 second part of the complex. Verstappen was therefore able to get alongside as they exited, and shot ahead on the inside as they surged through the famously fast Signes, the Turn 10 right. Now he had nine full laps to close the 5.2s gap to Hamilton.

"The backmarkers were not making it easy to clear them and gain a lot of time every lap," said Verstappen. He went from taking 1.8s per lap out of Hamilton in the first five tours of his surprise third stint (during which he set the race's fastest lap at 1m36.404s) to 0.5s in the time between passing Bottas and catching Hamilton for the

TRACK



Verstappen and Horner celebrate
first Red Bull double podium of 2021
– and a 37-point lead in the title chase

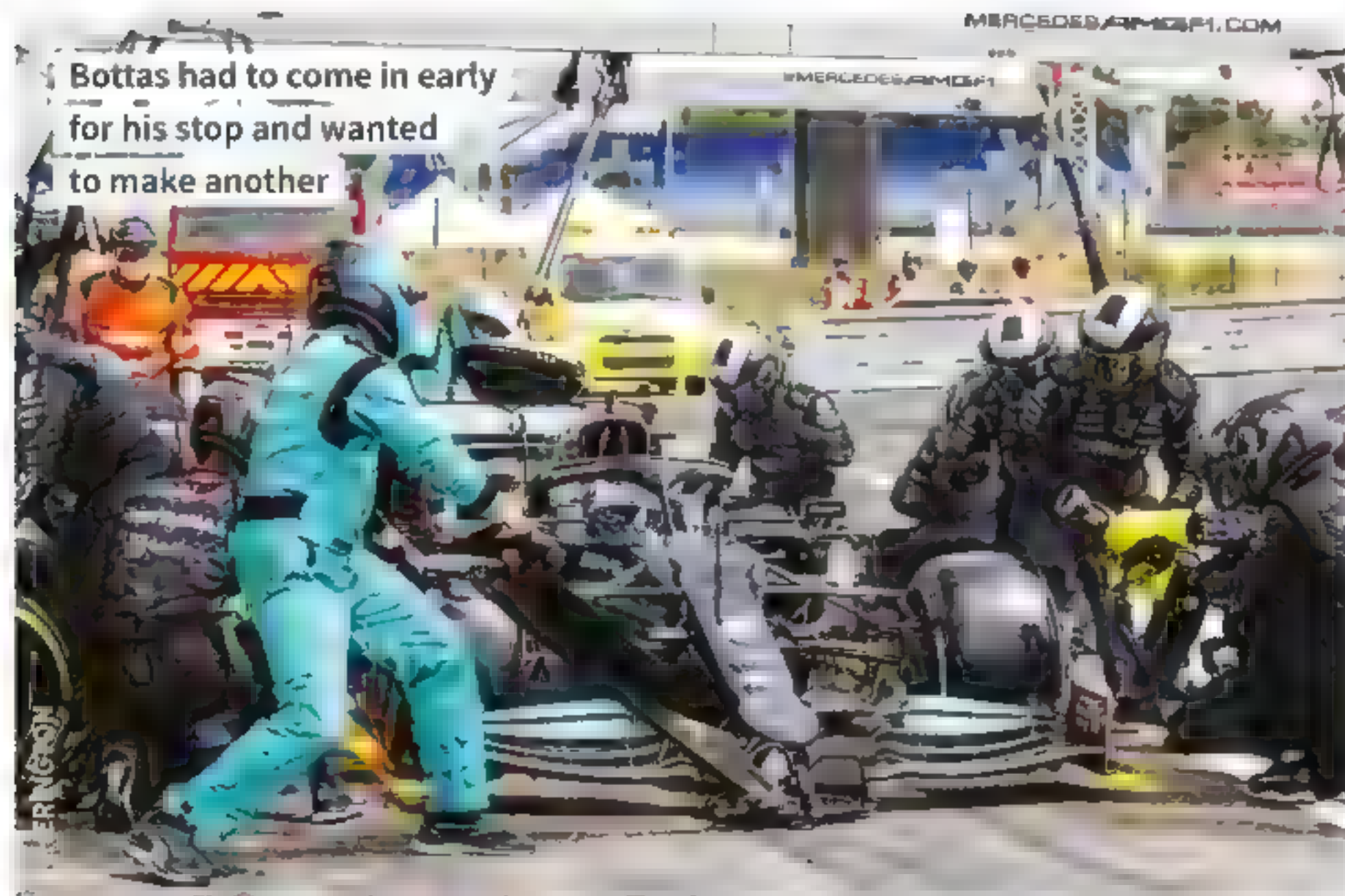


race's decisive moment, as the leader eked out impressively strong times on his ageing hards.

Verstappen started the penultimate tour 0.7s behind his title rival and, just as with Bottas, he didn't need to make two moves. Unlike in Bahrain, where Verstappen's offset rubber-life advantage in the final stint led to a not-too-dissimilar late surge, his sole passing move stuck.

Like Bottas, Hamilton moved to defend the inside run to Turn 8, but thought "there's marbles on the inside" so didn't "want to make my tyres any worse than they already were". Verstappen therefore stole further to the left and nipped ahead under braking for the first part of the chicane. As the crowd roared, Hamilton had felt "it was pointless to defend any harder". "I just had no front end," he added.

"THE STRATEGIST GAVE THE OPTIONS AND SAID, 'WE HAVE GOT NOTHING TO LOSE.' SO WE PULLED THE TRIGGER"



"He would have got me either way."

Even Red Bull being unable to hear most of Verstappen's radio messages during his third-stint charge had no impact on an enthralling set of circumstances, rather familiar ones after the 2019 Hungarian GP and 2021 Spanish GP, in which Red Bull, for a change, had won.

"It was great to get Lewis and it was a little bit of payback for Barcelona earlier in the year with a lap and a half to go," said Horner.

Perez had already played his part in giving Red Bull victory in circumstances where it had previously only known defeat against Mercedes, but he wasn't finished. Between his out-lap and the end of lap 48, he'd homed in on Bottas at a rate of 0.7s per lap, and passed the second Mercedes driver – furious that his team had not also opted to switch to a two-stopper – at Signes four tours from the finish.

But this was not without controversy as he ran wide exiting the corner, which the stewards investigated but opted not to penalise because "the overtaking manoeuvre had actually been completed", said Masi, before Perez ran beyond the Signes exit kerbs. Masi added: "Once he did leave the track, the stewards deemed that he gave back any lasting advantage immediately."

In the vain hope that Perez would be penalised, Mercedes did not bring Bottas in to chase the fastest lap point on fresh tyres.

Wolff reckoned his team "got it wrong" on strategy but, really, a two-pronged Red Bull had been the one able to gain through tactics. The winner was also aided by getting "back into a nice balance" on car handling by the middle of the race after "just oversteering a lot in the beginning" in the tricky conditions.

"It is sweet being the hunter," Lambiase told Verstappen as he crossed the line, a third season win, from a second 2021 pole, in the bag. Verstappen's lead of a championship battle for the ages is now 12 points. ❧

NEXT F1 REPORT

STYRIAN GRAND PRIX 1 JULY ISSUE

It's straight off to the Red Bull Ring for the first of two races at a track that's been a happy hunting ground for Verstappen. Can Mercedes stop him?

McLAREN STRATEGY SPLIT NETS 5-6 FINISH

McLaren split its pitstop strategies in France before Lando Norris headed home Daniel Ricciardo in a 5-6 for the team.

Norris had endured a poor start from eighth on the grid that shuffled him behind Ricciardo, but the two showed good pace after a second-lap squabble into Turn 1, and were able to make up ground as Fernando Alonso and Charles Leclerc began to reach the end of their tyre life.

Ricciardo pitted on lap 16, falling behind Leclerc again, but possessed good pace to make his way back up the order while maintaining his tyres. Norris waited until lap 24 before he collected hard Pirellis, falling to 14th. But he managed to cruise through the field with relative ease after that, until he reached Pierre Gasly.

Norris attempted a move around the outside of Le Beausset, but hadn't expected the Frenchman to try to hold the inside line, and Gasly kept 10th position by running off track. Norris eventually cleared the AlphaTauri with DRS down the Mistral Straight on the next lap, and later picked off Carlos Sainz Jr to get back on terms with Ricciardo.

Ricciardo did not impede Norris as he came past with DRS into the chicane on lap 33, and they went on to claim fifth and sixth after the Aston Martins pitted, although Ricciardo just held on after dealing with Gasly and Alonso in the final laps.



Tyre management struggles drop Ferrari out of points

Ferrari left Paul Ricard empty-handed after both Carlos Sainz Jr and Charles Leclerc struggled to manage their tyres and slumped out of the points.

Ferrari looked set to pull further clear of McLaren in the constructors' championship when Sainz led the midfield in qualifying to take fifth on the grid, and then Leclerc undercut Daniel Ricciardo and Pierre Gasly at the first round of pitstops.

But both Ferrari drivers quickly dropped back as they struggled with the hard tyres graining. Sainz was passed by Lando Norris, Gasly, Fernando Alonso, Sebastian Vettel and Lance Stroll through the second stint, claiming afterwards that his tyre wear was twice as bad as those around him.

"Cars that yesterday we were half a second quicker than, like the McLarens, towards the end of the race, they were two seconds faster per lap,"

said Sainz. He crossed the line 11th, while Ferrari's decision to switch Leclerc to a two-stop strategy failed to pay off when he then struggled with blue flags. He finished 16th, calling it "one of the most difficult races of my time in Formula 1".

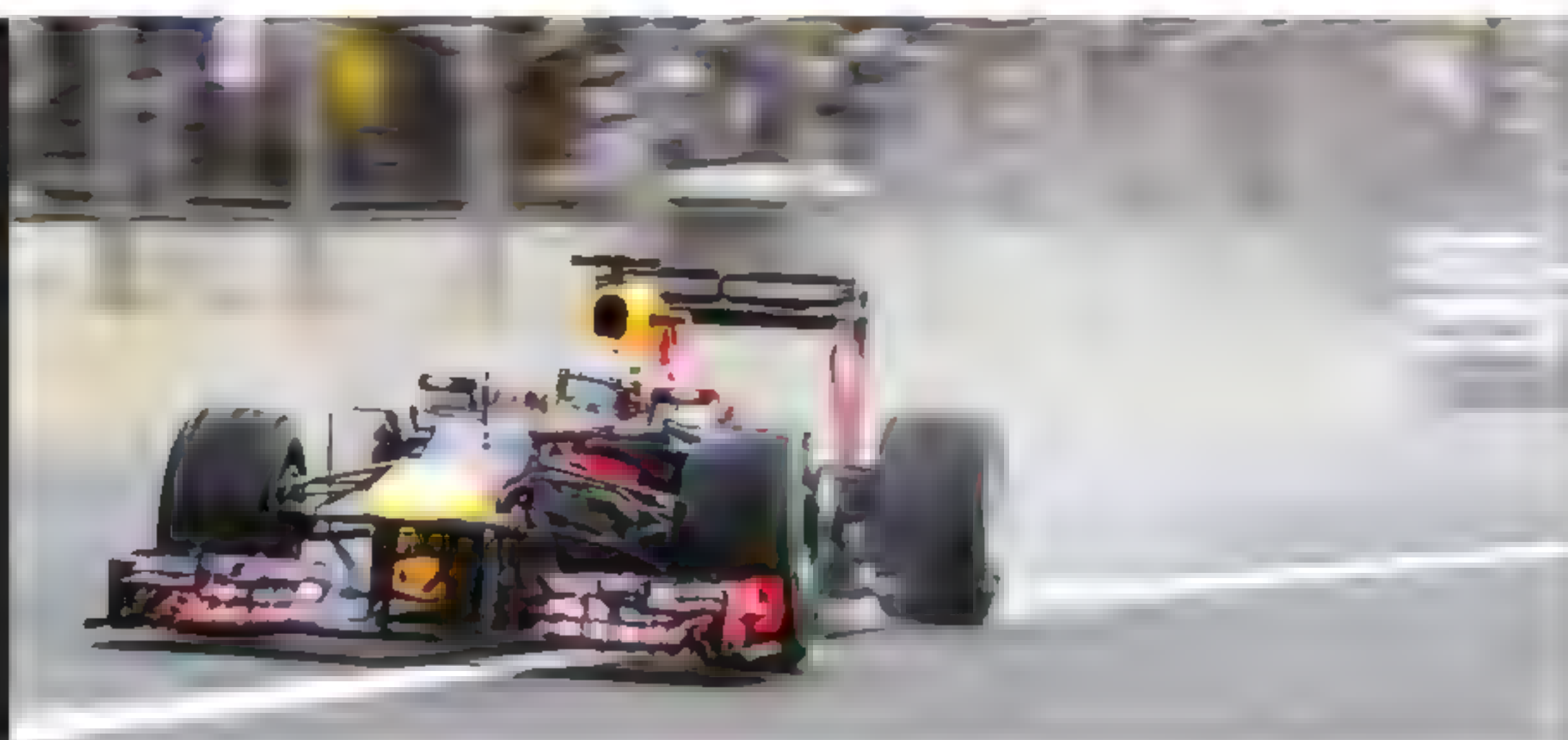
Ferrari explained that a narrow working range for its front tyres had led to its struggles over the long runs, leaving it with work to do to understand the issue. "We struggle a lot more with graining and with front wear than our competitors," said Sainz. "We are trying to understand why we have such a narrow window."

But team principal Mattia Binotto was uncertain that the issue could be totally resolved on the Ferrari SF21. "We may improve the situation, but to solve it, I think we need to have some hardware change which is not possible with the regulations," he said.

BIG STAT

Brazil 2013

The last time Red Bull scored three successive F1 wins, although this was actually the final victory in Sebastian Vettel's nine-race win streak.



Q&A

**FERNANDO ALONSO
ALPINE DRIVER****How would you summarise the race?**

It was a good Sunday, good points for the team. Another four in the pocket. Started ninth, finished eighth. It's a good execution of the race and I finished in front of both Ferraris and Aston Martins.

You made a good start – is that a strength of you or the car?

It has been my strongest point for 20 years! So why not still now? The starts are that moment of the race that you need to improvise a little bit;



you need to be creative. It's just yourself and your instinct. Now I'm more comfortable with the car – with the start procedure, with the tyres as well. So yeah, happy with the

starts so far, but then slowly in the race you fall to your deserved position.

What happened at the end of the first stint, with Esteban Ocon behind and the swap discussion?

Obviously we talk about this, that it could be a possibility in the race. Because we started with different tyres, in that moment of the race we can meet. We were stopping on that

lap [18] or in the next lap, so while Esteban was fighting with an Aston Martin, maybe it was not the best moment [to swap]. He was stopping the following lap and actually it was the best decision to give him free air.

How were your battles with the Ferraris?

There are some circuits that are very hard on tyres, like here, and we had the chance to fight with them, which is nice. We saw in the street circuits that the amount of energy they put on the tyre is a help, and we saw Leclerc on pole in Monaco and Baku, and in some other circuits it's a disadvantage. So, we benefit from that, but we still need to work on trying to understand this tyre.

**ASTON MARTIN
MAKES LONG
STINTS WORK**

Lance Stroll's high-speed Baku tyre failure occurred as the Canadian was trying to make a long hard-tyre stint work out. But despite Pirelli increasing the tyre pressures for the subsequent French Grand Prix, Aston was still able to make another long stint on the white-walled compound work out for both drivers.

Sebastian Vettel ran as high as fifth as the cars ahead of him dived between earlier stops or switching to two-stop strategies (Charles Leclerc), and was able to set consistently good lap times on a well-worn set of tyres. The four-time world champion eventually pitted for mediums on lap 37, and was able to claim ninth from Carlos Sainz Jr with 10 laps to go as the Ferraris struggled to contend with the higher-than-expected tyre wear.

Stroll, meanwhile, had to recover from being unable to set a lap in qualifying, and managed to pick his way through the rearguard regulars before shuffling up to sixth from 19th on the grid ahead of his sole pitstop, a lap before Vettel's. From there, he worked his way past George Russell, Yuki Tsunoda and Sainz to claim 10th, securing Aston Martin another double points finish.

"I hope that silences the critics that say we're doing something untoward with the tyres," said team principal Otmar Szafnauer. "We never have. We just have a good understanding as to what to do."

**Russell comes home 12th after
'best ever race' with Williams**

George Russell lifted Williams back up to ninth in the constructors' championship with a charge to 12th in France.

After running 18th early on following a poor start, Russell jumped Esteban Ocon, Kimi Raikkonen and Antonio Giovinazzi on the pit undercut before also gaining a place when Charles Leclerc pitted a second time.

Russell managed his tyres well to close on Yuki Tsunoda in the final

stages, passing for 12th with three laps to go. "Finishing 12th on merit, I would go as far as saying that is probably our best ever race together [with Williams]," said Russell. "It's a shame nothing happened in front [so he could score a point]."

AlphaTauri driver Tsunoda started from the pitlane after taking a new floor and gearbox following his Q1 crash, but overcut the hard-compound starters to finish 13th, fending off Ocon on the last lap.

AUTOSPORT

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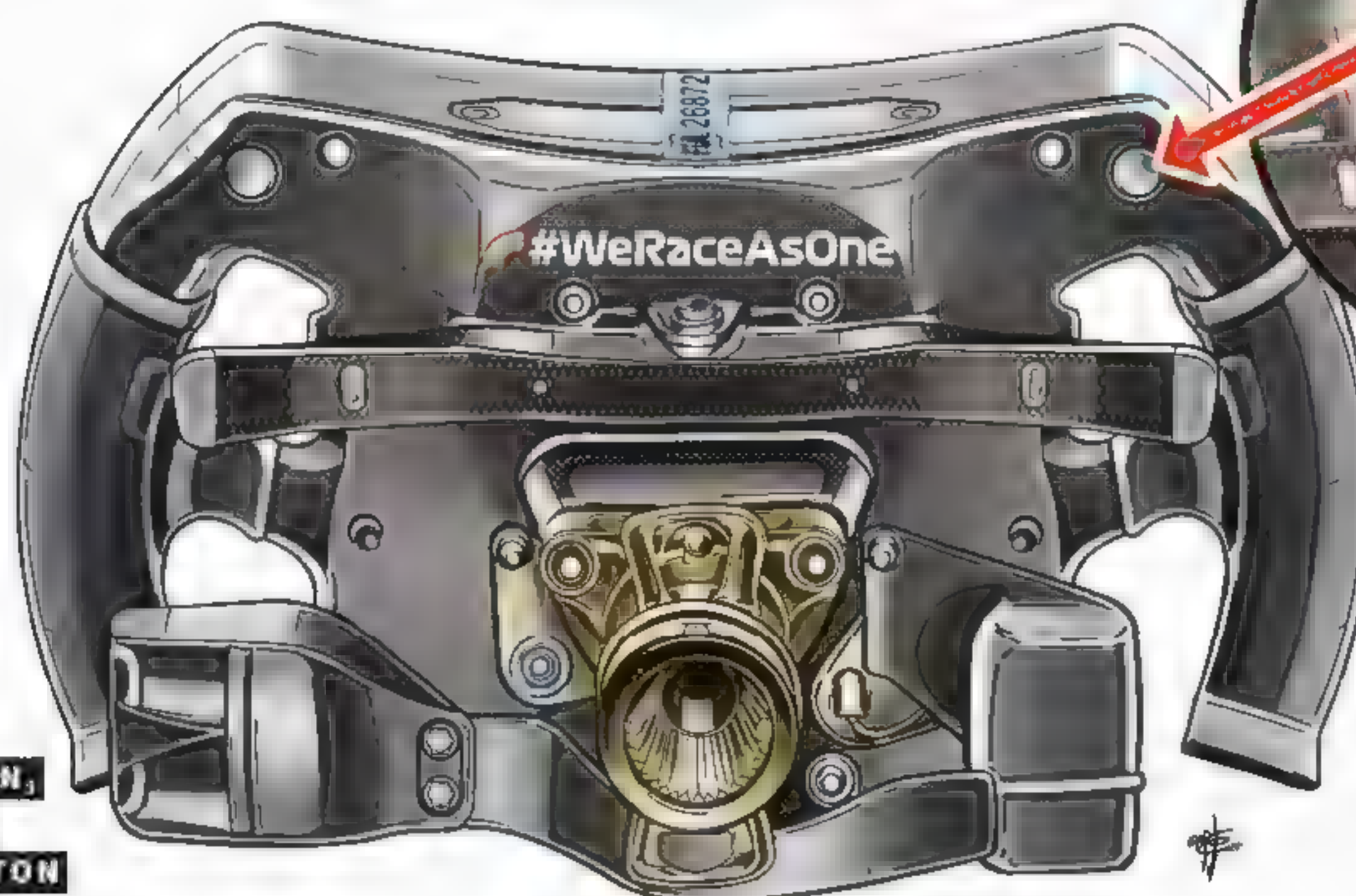
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DRAWING BOARD

GIORGIO PIOLA



**NO TIME FOR A REDESIGN,
SO MERCEDES FITTED A
'SHROUD' AROUND BUTTON**

MERCEDES PROTECTS HAMILTON'S 'MAGIC BUTTON'

In the wake of Lewis Hamilton's 'magic button' finger trouble at the Azerbaijan Grand Prix, Mercedes had to find a quick solution for his steering wheel to ensure that the problem did not happen again. When Hamilton accidentally activated the button last time out, it shifted all of the brake bias forward, as is usually done for front-tyre warm-up. On this occasion it came at the moment when he braked for Turn 1, forcing

him off the circuit and allowing Sergio Perez to pick up his first Red Bull win.

Mercedes, however, can't simply go away and redesign the steering wheel in just over a week, and so a small modification had to do. The button now sits in what Hamilton termed as a "shroud" to ensure it can't be accidentally triggered by any wayward finger action. "We haven't moved it, we've just put a

shroud around it just to make sure that I can't accidentally touch it in future," said Hamilton in the pre-event press conference at Paul Ricard. "But that's for the short term. It's obviously the [case with the] wheel, it's not so easy to change or to move buttons, it was all designed [like that]. So we'll look for a longer term solution probably in the future."

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

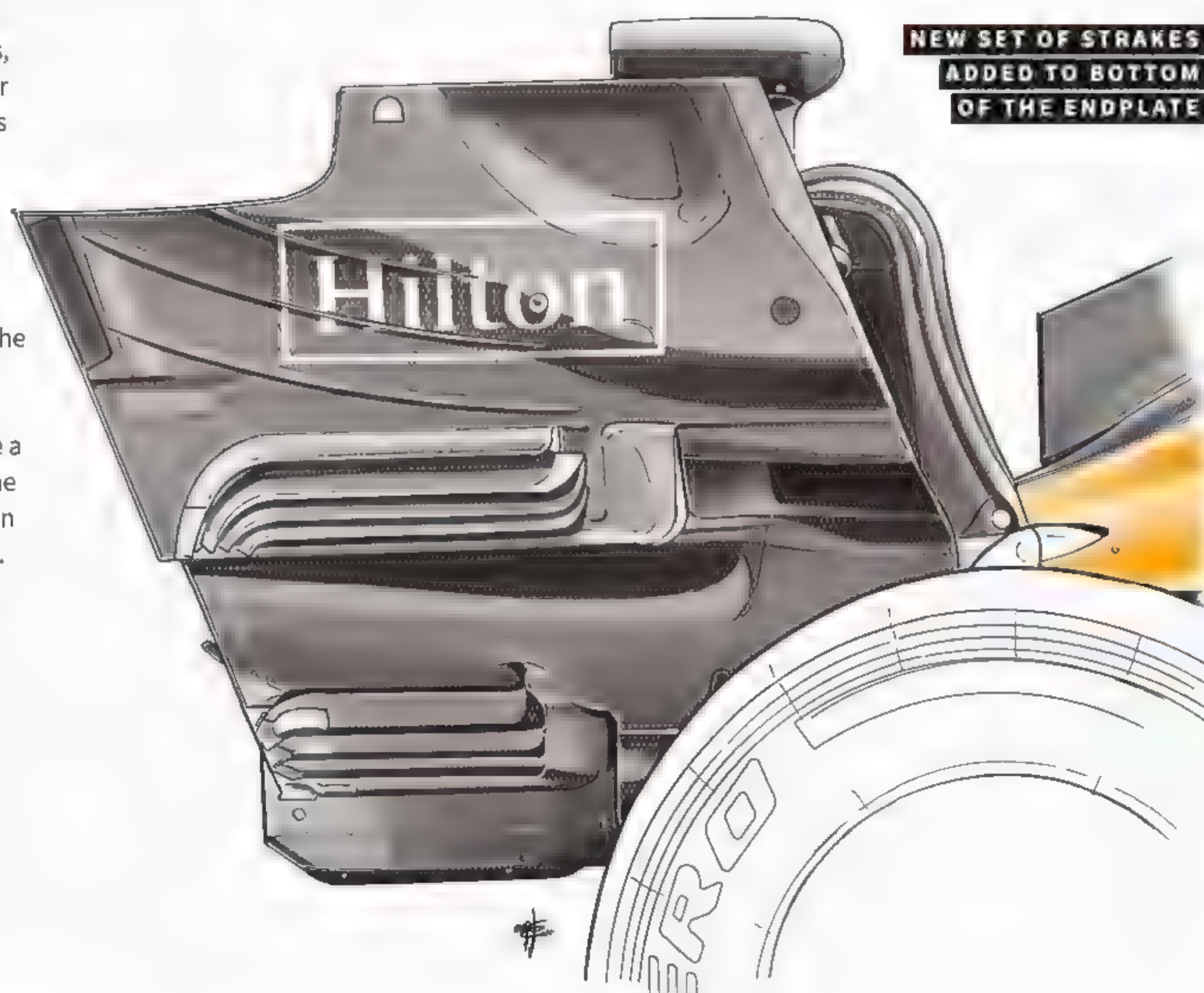
McLAREN'S CURIOUS REAR-WING TWEAKS

McLaren was looking to leapfrog Ferrari and return to third in the constructors' standings, and introduced a new rear-wing endplate for the French Grand Prix. In recent years, teams have used strakes at the very bottom of the endplate to control airflow around the rear tyres and try to expand the working volume of the diffuser area, but McLaren tried something different at Paul Ricard.

Instead, it mimicked the curved slots on the endplate overhang above, and introduced another collection where the lowest strakes would ordinarily be positioned. It seems like a curious addition, and it could well be that the team has identified an upwash component in the airflow around that area to capitalise on. Whatever the team has seen from its aero data to compel it to change the slot design, it evidently yielded the performance gains that McLaren was looking for, and both cars ran with it in France.

Although Lando Norris's run to fifth was arguably more down to strategy, Daniel Ricciardo looked the most comfortable he's been in the MCL35M. With Ferrari enduring an off-weekend, McLaren indeed squeaked back into third in the points table.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE



**NEW SET OF STRAKES
ADDED TO BOTTOM
OF THE ENDPLATE**

20 Tsunoda #22 no Q1 time	18 Mazepin #9 1m33.554s	16 Latifi #6 1m33.062s	14 Russell #63 1m32.065s	12 Vettel #5 1m31.767s
19 Stroll #18 2m12.584s	17 Raikkonen #7 1m33.354s	15 Schumacher #47 no Q2 time	13 Giovinazzi #99 1m31.813s	11 Ocon #31 1m31.736s

FREE PRACTICE 1

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Bottas	1m33.448s
2	Hamilton	1m33.783s
3	Verstappen	1m33.880s
4	Perez	1m34.193s
5	Ocon	1m34.329s
6	Ricciardo	1m34.644s
7	Alonso	1m34.693s
8	Gasly	1m34.699s
9	Norris	1m34.707s
10	Tsunoda	1m34.847s
11	Leclerc	1m34.950s
12	Giovinazzi	1m35.116s
13	Raikkonen	1m35.135s
14	Stroll	1m35.275s
15	Vettel	1m35.289s
16	Sainz	1m35.342s
17	Latifi	1m35.612s
18	Mazepin	1m36.651s
19	Schumacher	1m37.329s
20	Nissany	1m37.881s

WEATHER Windy, air 25-27C track 37-44C

FREE PRACTICE 2

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Verstappen	1m32.872s
2	Bottas	1m32.880s
3	Hamilton	1m33.125s
4	Alonso	1m33.340s
5	Leclerc	1m33.550s
6	Ocon	1m33.685s
7	Gasly	1m33.696s
8	Sainz	1m33.698s
9	Raikkonen	1m33.786s
10	Norris	1m33.822s
11	Giovinazzi	1m33.831s
12	Perez	1m33.921s
13	Tsunoda	1m33.955s
14	Ricciardo	1m34.079s
15	Vettel	1m34.447s
16	Stroll	1m34.632s
17	Russell	1m35.266s
18	Latifi	1m35.331s
19	Schumacher	1m35.512s
20	Mazepin	1m35.551s

WEATHER Windy, air 26-28C track 45-48C

FREE PRACTICE 3

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Verstappen	1m31.300s
2	Bottas	1m32.047s
3	Sainz	1m32.195s
4	Perez	1m32.238s
5	Hamilton	1m32.266s
6	Norris	1m32.336s
7	Alonso	1m32.624s
8	Ocon	1m32.681s
9	Gasly	1m32.707s
10	Ricciardo	1m32.759s
11	Leclerc	1m32.820s
12	Giovinazzi	1m33.017s
13	Stroll	1m33.051s
14	Vettel	1m33.200s
15	Raikkonen	1m33.328s
16	Russell	1m33.364s
17	Tsunoda	1m33.424s
18	Latifi	1m33.584s
19	Schumacher	1m34.143s
20	Mazepin	1m34.642s

WEATHER Overcast, air 25-26C track 36-37C

SEASON STATS

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS	BEST FINISH	BEST QUAL
1 Verstappen	131	1	1
2 Hamilton	119	1	1
3 Perez	84	1	2
4 Norris	76	3	5
5 Bottas	59	3	1
6 Leclerc	52	4	1
7 Sainz	42	2	4
8 Gasly	37	3	4
9 Ricciardo	34	6	6
10 Vettel	30	2	8
11 Alonso	17	6	9
12 Ocon	12	7	5
13 Stroll	10	8	10
14 Tsunoda	8	7	8
15 Raikkonen	1	10	14
16 Giovinazzi	1	10	10
17 Russell	0	12	11
18 Schumacher	0	13	15
19 Mazepin	0	14	18
20 Latifi	0	15	14

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Red Bull	215
2 Mercedes	178
3 McLaren	110
4 Ferrari	94
5 AlphaTauri	45
6 Aston Martin	40
7 Alpine	29
8 Alfa Romeo	2
9 Williams	0
10 Haas	0

QUALIFYING BATTLE

Hamilton	5	2 Bottas
Perez	1	6 Verstappen
Ricciardo	3	4 Norris
Vettel	4	3 Stroll
Alonso	3	4 Ocon
Leclerc	5	2 Sainz
Gasly	7	0 Tsunoda
Raikkonen	2	5 Giovinazzi
Mazepin	1	6 Schumacher
Latifi	0	7 Russell

Scores ignore sessions if a driver didn't participate in qualifying or had a serious technical problem

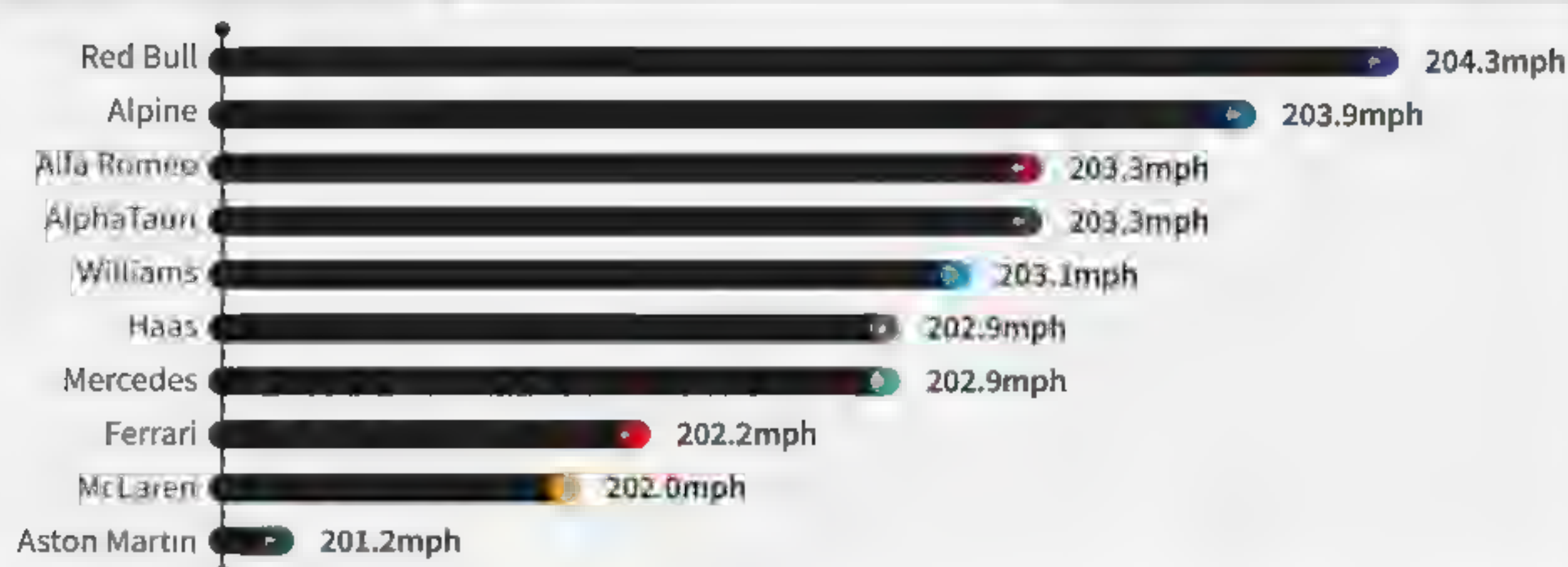
WINS

Hamilton	3	Hamilton	2
Verstappen	3	Leclerc	2
Perez	1	Verstappen	2
		Bottas	1

FASTEST LAPS

Verstappen	3
Bottas	2
Hamilton	2

SPEED TRAP (QUALIFYING)



QUALIFYING 1

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Verstappen	1m31.001s
2	Hamilton	1m31.237s
3	Perez	1m31.560s
4	Bottas	1m31.669s
5	Norris	1m31.733s
6	Gasly	1m31.898s
7	Sainz	1m32.079s
8	Vettel	1m32.132s
9	Ocon	1m32.139s
10	Alonso	1m32.158s
11	Ricciardo	1m32.181s
12	Leclerc	1m32.209s
13	Giovinazzi	1m32.722s
14	Schumacher	1m32.942s
15	Russell	1m33.060s
16	Latifi	1m33.062s
17	Raikkonen	1m33.354s
18	Mazepin	1m33.554s
19	Stroll	2m12.584s
20	Tsunoda	notime

QUALIFYING 2

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Bottas	1m30.735s
2	Hamilton	1m30.788s
3	Perez	1m30.971s
4	Verstappen	1m31.080s
5	Sainz	1m31.146s
6	Gasly	1m31.353s
7	Norris	1m31.542s
8	Alonso	1m31.549s
9	Leclerc	1m31.567s
10	Ricciardo	1m31.615s
11	Ocon	1m31.736s
12	Vettel	1m31.767s
13	Giovinazzi	1m31.813s
14	Russell	1m32.065s
15	Schumacher	notime

QUALIFYING 3

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Verstappen	1m29.990s
2	Hamilton	1m30.248s
3	Bottas	1m30.376s
4	Perez	1m30.445s
5	Sainz	1m30.840s
6	Gasly	1m30.868s
7	Leclerc	1m30.987s
8	Norris	1m31.252s
9	Alonso	1m31.340s
10	Ricciardo	1m31.382s

WEATHER Overcast, air 28-30C track 41-46C



STARTING GRID

10 Ricciardo #3 1m31.382s	9 Alonso #14 1m31.340s	8 Norris #4 1m31.252s	7 Leclerc #16 1m30.987s	6 Gasly #10 1m30.868s	5 Sainz #55 1m30.840s	4 Perez #11 1m30.445s	3 Bottas #77 1m30.376s	2 Hamilton #44 1m30.248s	1 Verstappen #33 1m29.990s
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RACE RESULTS ROUND 7/23 (53 LAPS - 192.44 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISHTIME	LED	TYRES
1	Max Verstappen (NLD)	Red Bull-Honda	1h27m25.770s	10	Mu, Hn, Mu
2	Lewis Hamilton (GBR)	Mercedes	+2.904s	38	Mu, Hn
3	Sergio Perez (MEX)	Red Bull-Honda	+8.811s	5	Mu, Hn
4	Valtteri Bottas (FIN)	Mercedes	+14.618s		Mu, Hn
5	Lando Norris (GBR)	McLaren-Mercedes	+1m04.032s		Mu, Hn
6	Daniel Ricciardo (AUS)	McLaren-Mercedes	+1m15.857s		Mu, Hn
7	Pierre Gasly (FRA)	AlphaTauri-Honda	+1m16.596s		Mu, Hn
8	Fernando Alonso (ESP)	Alpine-Renault	+1m17.695s		Mu, Hn
9	Sebastian Vettel (DEU)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	+1m19.666s		Hn, Mu
10	Lance Stroll (CAN)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	+1m31.946s		Hn, Mn
11	Carlos Sainz Jr (ESP)	Ferrari	+1m39.337s		Mu, Hn
12	George Russell (GBR)	Williams-Mercedes	-1 lap/+8.049s		Mn, Hn
13	Yuki Tsunoda (JPN)	AlphaTauri-Honda	-1 lap/+12.371s		Mn, Hn
14	Esteban Ocon (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	-1 lap/+13.117s		Hn, Mu
15	Antonio Giovinazzi (ITA)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	-1 lap/+17.596s		Hn, Mn
16	Charles Leclerc (MCO)	Ferrari	-1 lap/+20.874s		Mu, Hn, Mu
17	Kimi Raikkonen (FIN)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	-1 lap/+22.684s		Hn, Mn
18	Nicholas Latifi (CAN)	Williams-Mercedes	-1 lap/+23.451s		Mn, Hn
19	Mick Schumacher (DEU)	Haas-Ferrari	-1 lap/+54.137s		Mn, Hn
20	Nikita Mazepin (RUS)	Haas-Ferrari	-1 lap/+1m08.232s		Hn, Mn

FASTEST LAPS

POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	Verstappen	1m36.404s	-	35
2	Perez	1m36.693s	+0.289s	53
3	Bottas	1m36.960s	+0.556s	19
4	Vettel	1m37.138s	+0.734s	52
5	Hamilton	1m37.410s	+1.006s	44
6	Norris	1m37.425s	+1.021s	52
7	Alonso	1m37.646s	+1.242s	44
8	Leclerc	1m37.681s	+1.277s	43
9	Stroll	1m37.828s	+1.424s	44
10	Raikkonen	1m37.992s	+1.588s	46
11	Gasly	1m38.103s	+1.699s	44
12	Latifi	1m38.313s	+1.909s	50
13	Russell	1m38.314s	+1.910s	52
14	Ricciardo	1m38.324s	+1.920s	45
15	Ocon	1m38.645s	+2.241s	33
16	Giovinazzi	1m38.702s	+2.298s	36
17	Schumacher	1m38.847s	+2.443s	51
18	Sainz	1m38.931s	+2.527s	19
19	Tsunoda	1m38.980s	+2.576s	18
20	Mazepin	1m39.317s	+2.913s	34

WEATHER Overcast and windy, air 24-27C track 33-38C

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 132.07mph FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED 135.56mph

TYRES

KEY: H - Hard M - Medium S - Soft I - Intermediate W - Wet n - New set u - Used set



RACE BRIEFING

FP1

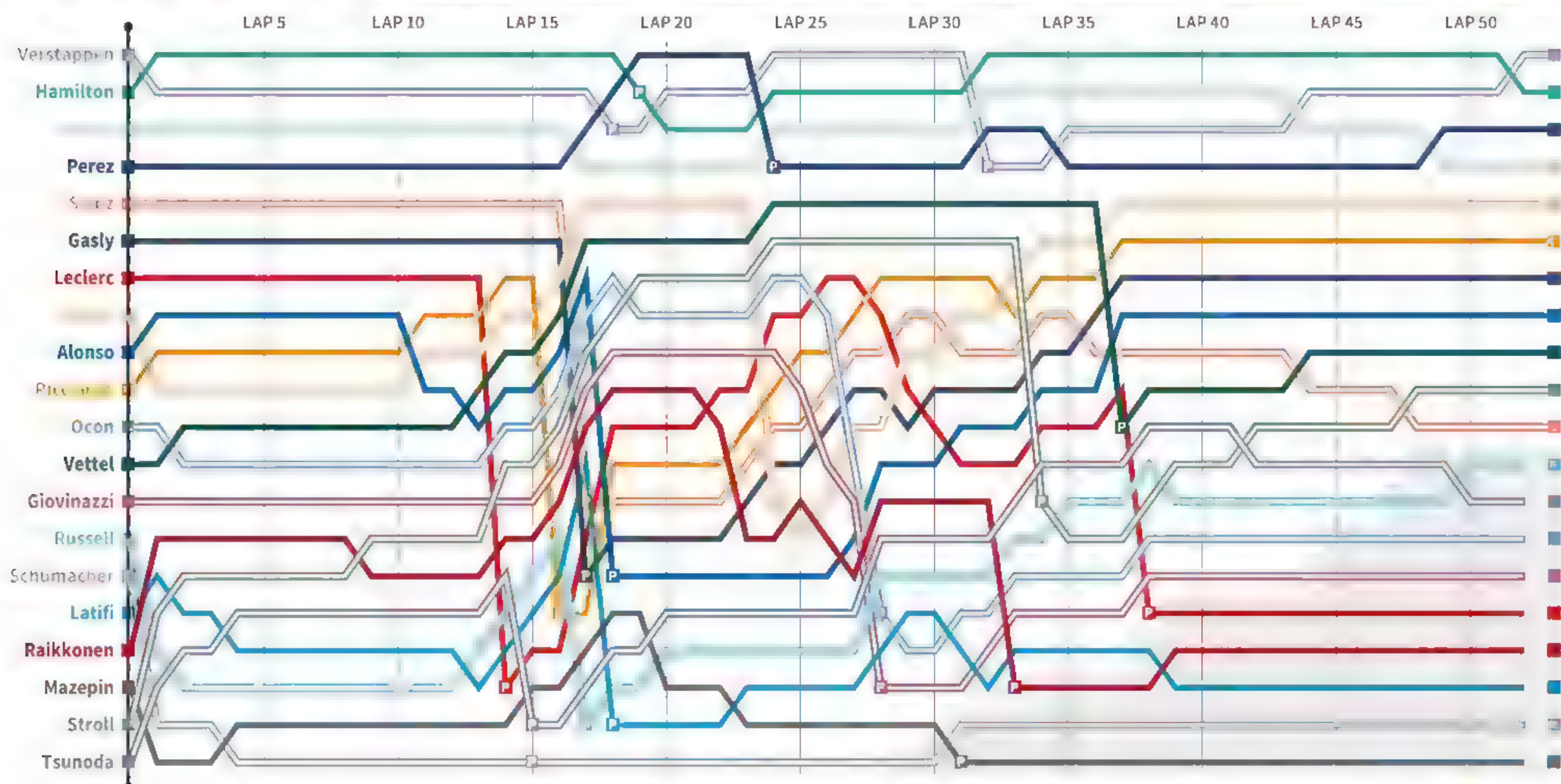
ROY NISSANY replaced RUSSELL at Williams

GRID PENALTIES

TSUNODA Five-place penalty for replacement gearbox, required to start from pitlane as car modified while under parc ferme conditions



LAP CHART What happened, when



P Pitstop C Crash M Mechanical failure S Spin + Penalty L Car lapped SC Safety car

FIVE FALL JUST SHORT OF FULL MARKS IN FRANCE

Hamilton, Verstappen, Norris, Vettel and Russell are our top scorers on a weekend when no one had an entirely blot-free copybook

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

MERCEDES



LEWIS HAMILTON

Started 2nd — Result 2nd

9 Tiny things result in a missed maximum. Was edged out in qualifying, where Red Bull holds the slight pace advantage anyway, then was excellent in his gifted early-race lead. Probably could have defended harder against Verstappen late on, although he disagrees.



VALTTERI BOTTAS

Started 3rd — Result 4th

7 A pretty strong weekend, but his score is mainly down to his qualifying defeat to Hamilton, and flat-spotting his starting tyres, which led to an early stop and set his team on a path to defeat. Also messed up his defence against Verstappen, just when he needed to hold the Red Bull up.

RED BULL



SERGIO PEREZ

Started 4th — Result 3rd

8 A mistake running too heavily over the Turn 12 kerbs on final Q3 run cost the chance to start second, and he shipped time in the tricky early conditions. But his late first-stint pace and speed across his second with a tyre-life offset advantage versus Bottas was excellent.



MAX VERSTAPPEN

Started 1st — Result 1st

9 Was brilliant on run to pole, but threw away early race lead by getting caught out in the wind at Turns 1/2. This costs him the maximum, despite his excellent race from there, which got easier when handling balance returned on hard tyres. His 21 lap charge was scintillating.

McLAREN



DANIEL RICCIARDO

Started 10th — Result 6th

8 Is fractionally marked down for qualifying and finishing behind Norris, but a good return to form. Learned from 2019 start to sweep around the outside of several rivals at Turn 1, then put in nice move on Alonso. Used undercut effect well, and wisely didn't impede team-mate's offset strategy.



LANDO NORRIS

Started 8th — Result 5th

9 A poor start, but raced superbly, other than cutting Turn 2 in a bid to retake his team-mate, after Ricciardo and Alpines got ahead at Turn 1. Put in an opportunistic pass following Ricciardo past Alonso. Staying out until lap 24 meant rejoining 14th, but used extra tyre life well to surge to fifth.

ASTON MARTIN



SEBASTIAN VETTEL

Started 12th — Result 9th

9 Felt he pushed too hard with a tough car balance on the mediums in Q2, and so missed Q3. Ran longest of all the hard-tyre starters after a brave early pass on Ocon. But a lap 28, Turn 11 gust-caused off-track moment cost 3.6s, which likely would have put him higher in the results.



LANCE STROLL

Started 19th — Result 10th

7 Can't score higher because his track-limits violation in Q1 ended up being so costly when he was caught out without a banker by the red flags. Like his team-mate, executed a long opening stint on the hards. Was rewarded for getting past Russell, Tsunoda and Sainz with a point.

ALPINE



FERNANDO ALONSO

Started 9th — Result 8th

8 Made such a good start from ninth that he even led Leclerc for a chunk of lap one. Couldn't hold back McLarens as mediums grained, but managed that problem better on hards. Enjoyed his fights with the Ferraris as they faded, and was running strongly to get close to Gasly and Ricciardo at the finish.



ESTEBAN OCON

Started 11th — Result 14th

5 Score is mainly down to not making Q3 when his team-mate did, undone by the intricacies of switching to mediums mid-qualifying. Made feisty start, but soon passed by Norris and Vettel. Suffered badly with graining on both tyres, and couldn't pass Russell after falling behind at late stop.

FERRARI



CHARLES LECLERC

Started 7th — Result 16th

6 Felt qualifying defeat against Sainz was down to not coping as well with Ferrari's front end "limitation", but big difference between scores was that his race tyre management was worse. Ferrari even had to put him onto a two-stopper, and he eventually came home lapped, ahead only of the 'Class C' runners.



CARLOS SAINZ JR

Started 5th — Result 11th

8 Expected big things after showing strong Friday long-run pace and being best of the rest in qualifying, which boosts score by one. Both Ferrari drivers struggled with tyre wear, but he could eke out his first stint to lap 17, which Leclerc could not, even as they both tumbled from the points.



ALPHATAURI



Started 6th — Result 7th

8 Did excellent job to outqualify Leclerc and the McLarens. In the race, struggled along with the rest with front-left graining. Felt getting undercut by Ricciardo cost him, even if he dispatched the Ferraris afterwards. Lucky not to get a penalty for going off-track defending against Norris.



Started 20th Result 13th

6 Can't score higher with his qualifying crash and considerable gap to Gasly. Did well to gain two places on lap one from his pitlane start, where he nearly jumped the lights. Then late on he paid the price for pushing his hard tyres early on in the second stint.

ALFA ROMEO



Started 17th — Result 17th

5 Caught out by late Q1 red flag but, had he nailed his initial attempt as his team-mate did, then at least beating Latifi and maybe escaping Q1 was on. Nailed first lap to rise three spots, but he too struggled on the hards. Felt happier on the medium tyres after stopping later than most.



Started 13th Result 15th

7 Highlight was Q2 lap, just 0.198s adrift of putting him through to Q3 for second time in 2021. Briefly threatened Norris on lap one (lucky not to damage his front wing on the Turn 4 kerbs) and then lost out to Vettel. Struggled with graining on the hards, and made few inroads on contra strategy.

HAAS



Started 18th Result 20th

5 Paid price for being a shade slower than his team-mate in early qualifying runs between the red flags. Pounced when Schumacher lost ground battling Russell on lap four and was just on the right side of acceptable as they nearly clashed side-by-side exiting Turn 3.



Started 15th — Result 19th

5 Q2 progression was only guaranteed by the late Q1 red flag caused by his crash at Turn 6. Undid a good start by sliding into Turn 4 from the Turn 3 approach kerbs, and later outmuscled by his team-mate at the same spot. Conventional one-stopper worked out better versus Mazepin.

WILLIAMS



Started 16th — Result 18th

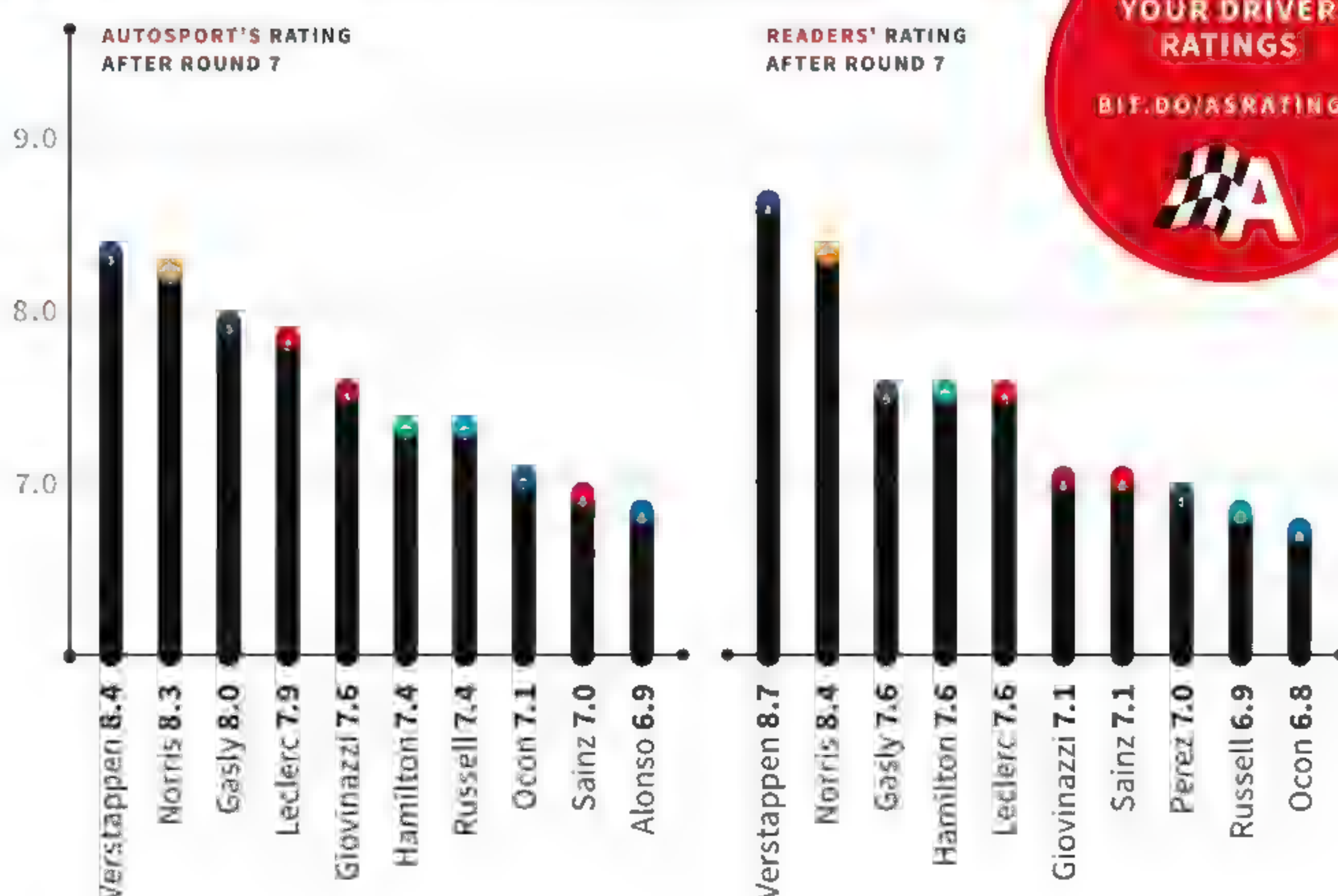
5 This score is essentially down to his final finishing position versus his team-mate's, which demonstrated where this package could have been taken. He was also knocked out in Q1 when Russell wasn't, although this is complicated by the late red flag spoiling things.



Started 14th Result 12th

9 Made Q2, then put in his "best ever" Williams race. Poor start after not getting tyres up to temperature and getting pressured into a lock-up by Stroll, and then being swooped by Tsunoda, costs the maximum. But he recovered well and charged to 12th, unfortunate that no one retired ahead.

TOP 10 AVERAGE RATINGS



MORTARA RULES ROOST AS WEHRLEIN RUES RULES

The Venturi driver tops the points table after a weekend when the series' letter-of-the-law adherence cost Porsche's charger a maiden victory

MATT KEW

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It's ironic that the Valley of Mexico should sit well in excess of 2000 metres above sea level. And there's something in the very thin air in this region that's seemingly hellbent on scuppering Pascal Wehrlein and his pursuit of a maiden Formula E victory. It's the same air that appears to profit Lucas di Grassi time and time again as he ended a protracted drought to land a third triumph in the region. Meanwhile, the altitude left Edoardo Mortara utterly breathless on his way to the spoils the next day to depart Latin America with a comparatively commanding points lead by the standards of the series.

Wehrlein was just 10 metres away from scoring the win in Mexico City in 2019 when his Mahindra Racing machine swigged

the last of its energy and he fell prey to di Grassi at the line, the Brazilian's second success at the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez. Fans rose to their feet in celebration and after such a show, they returned to the venue in their droves last season. As championship chief executive officer Jamie Reigle told Autosport last Friday: "Mexico is one of the few markets where we've got real traction."

But with the classic Formula 1 venue currently housing a COVID-19 vaccination centre, it couldn't reprise its electric role in 2021. With Reigle "adamant" the country wouldn't fall off the calendar, it led to an unlikely call up for the off-beat Miguel E Abed circuit that's a 45-minute drive from the city of Puebla. At this diminutive 15-turn oval-based track, a debate broke out that



Wehrlein
takes control at
the start of race one.
He was leading
comfortably at
the end.

will continue in the paddock for some time. When should the rules soften in order to save face for Formula E?

Wehrlein was imperious throughout the first race day. The Porsche ace topped group qualifying after the rain from 18 hours earlier bizarrely rose through the cracked asphalt. He then snared a second pole for himself and the manufacturer in the country by 0.058 seconds over one-lap star Oliver Rowland. At the getaway, he took full advantage of the Nissan e.dams driver's strife – a broken radio and software glitch that cut the Briton's revs on his launch and dropped him to 14th – to lead away unchallenged.

That left it to fifth-starting Maximilian Guenther to give chase, the BMW Andretti charger surging by Jean-Eric Vergne, who was

forced into immediate avoiding action starting directly behind Rowland. But when Guenther lost time as he dropped a wheel onto the grass, in the eyes of Andretti Autosport team principal Roger Griffiths it gave Wehrlein a “freebie” as he dived into the joker lap-style attack mode gate and resumed in third. He was soon restored to the front as Guenther and his BMW team-mate Jake Dennis moved for their 35kW boost and from there Wehrlein built a gap. Leading from lap eight to the flag after 28 tours, the grand prix refugee bagged the spoils by nearly 4s for what should have been an historic first victory for Porsche.

However, he was under investigation. Race engineer Kyle Wilson-Clarke had advised Wehrlein to pull out a 5s cushion to >>



cover off any looming penalty, but even that would have proved wildly insufficient. Moments after Wehrlein crossed the line, his name flicked to the foot of the timing screens. He was disqualified. The crime? Porsche hadn't declared its tyre allocation ahead of the race, which breached the rules governing the technical passport for each car and meant supplier Michelin could not "perform the required pressure management". There was no performance advantage to be gained. It was administrative error whereby someone had clicked one button on the laptop rather than the correct one.

Head of Porsche FE operations Amiel Lindesay said: "I talked about it with the FIA. It's something as a group that we need to work on to make sure such a thing doesn't rule over the championship. It doesn't look good in the big picture."

By the letter of the law, it was foul play, but for a championship that endured a major image problem in Valencia in April amid mass energy retirements, it wasn't a good look and left viewers bewildered. Formula E co-founder Alejandro Agag was apoplectic: "I wanted to kill somebody. I saw a fantastic show by Porsche and



Wehrlein and Agag
air their frustrations
at the FIA's decision

HALLOWAY



Di Grassi embraces Rast after Audi 1-2 in opener, helped by Wehrlein's woe

Pascal. I wasn't happy with them not winning. Actually, we should apologise to the fans because they don't know what happened."

Team-mate Andrew Lotterer plus Rowland and stablemate Sebastien Buemi were thrown out for the same offence, and Porsche paid €2000 to appeal the outcome, a case it'll put together this week. The double-header round means overturning the results is almost impossible. Wehrlein lost 25 points, impacting his group qualifying position for the next day's race and changing the complexion of the title battle. This protest, it might be said, is more about kicking up a fuss to prevent such a detail from hammering reputations again.

With Wehrlein cast aside, Audi scored a momentous 1-2, di Grassi leading Rene Rast. The pair climbed from eighth and ninth on the grid, thanks in part to Guenther overconsuming energy and Alexander Sims pinching Vergne against the wall where the attack mode loop filters back onto the racing line. Neither di Grassi nor Audi had tasted victory since a home triumph in Berlin in 2019 as the e-tron FE07 – featuring the first powertrain to be designed in-house by the manufacturer – finally delivered on the race pace promise it's shown frequently this term. For 2016-17 champion di Grassi, there was a bittersweet taste to his success. Not because it was a win inherited, for he copped his fair share of bad luck when a driveshaft failure eliminated him from the lead in Rome. More because this new engine might not have its full potential exploited with Audi primed to quit Formula E at the end of the season.

He said: "We did a lot of work and we developed a winning car. For Audi to leave, considering that next year will be exactly the same powertrain and we'll have a winning powertrain again, it's very frustrating." But his chagrin during a moment of celebration pales compared to the strife Wehrlein experienced once again on Sunday.

He and Rowland reversed positions on the grid, the Nissan e.dams driver earning his fourth pole by a more generous 0.192s margin. Now fully able to communicate with his team, Rowland executed a daring strategy by moving for both of his attack modes early on. With Wehrlein covering off the threat and following suit, in the hotter Sunday temperatures both drivers asked a little too >>



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much of their tyres before letting them cool and so fell into the clutches of Mortara. The Swiss driver was a grateful recipient of third in race one after the headline exclusion came into effect and assumed first place 24 hours later.

As Wehrlein regained control of his rubber, he closed on Mortara. The thinner air meant he bided his time, waiting longer than normal to sit in the slipstream in a bid to build an energy advantage. The key passing point of the weekend, it looked as though a lunge into the tight Turn 1 left-hander would be Wehrlein's best bet. But through the eight-degree banked Turn 15, a suitable substitute for the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez's fabulous Peraltada curve, Mortara kept carving out a tenth or two to keep the Porsche in check.

Respite came, though, on lap 25 of 32 when Wehrlein ran wide on the approach to blind Turn 7 – the site of many incidents over the weekend, with the entry featuring a wall not included in the FIA simulator data that threw the drivers' line of sight. The minor lose itself only shed a couple of tenths, but bigger damage was dealt when Wehrlein washed wide over the marbles to fall 2.3s in arrears at the line. But even partial redemption with second place would prove short-lived. Still permitted to attend the post-race podium press conference, on his way over Wehrlein was told that he was again the focus of the stewards' attention. Initially under investigation for a power spike, often caused by cars reacting badly to bumps, it then transpired that he'd incorrectly deployed his fanboost. Opting to use it late in the race, he didn't have sufficient energy remaining to hit the minimum 240kW level. Some three

hours after the contest had ended, he was slapped with a 5s penalty and dropped to fourth in the amended results. That promoted Envision Virgin Racing rookie Nick Cassidy to a maiden podium, the runner-up atoning after a clumsy race-one shunt when he careered into the wall on the opening lap. Meanwhile, Rowland moved on to the bottom step of the rostrum. In two days, Wehrlein had bled 31 points and he now sits 12th in the table, 24 off the top.

It's Mortara who holds, by Formula E standards, an unconventional 10-point cushion as the new championship leader. A feat he really had to work for. Tuning into his team radio, he was panting his way round for the duration of the 45 minutes plus one lap on course to a second series win, the first coming in Hong Kong two years ago. "It was one of the most horrible race weekends for that," he told Autosport, still gasping for air after the media pen as he climbed the stairs to the track bridge. "I think I'm quite fit, but here, I guess because of the altitude, it was quite tough."

A fair criticism of Venturi Racing in the first half of the season has been that whenever Mercedes, its powertrain donor, has done one thing, the Monegasque squad has sought the opposite. When the Silver Arrows, with three wins so far in 2021, opted in qualifying to head straight for a flying lap, the Venturi Racing duo scrubbed their tyres with a conservative preparation lap. When the Mercs were relentlessly saving energy in the races, the white cars were copping penalties for overconsuming.

But after a six-week break since Monaco and a raft of software and procedural tweaks, the roles were emphatically reversed. "We were not having these kind of performances in the first part of the season," continued Mortara. "We understood a few things that we did wrong, and brought some solutions. But we were far actually from expecting that kind of form. We take it, that doesn't mean that we will be extremely competitive for the next race weekend [in New York City], but we will fight hard. We did an amazing job with analysing the data. It's a very small team but has great minds."

Where Mortara now has breathing space in one table, the manufacturers' race is growing ever tighter. No points in Monaco was compounded by just eight gained in Puebla for Mercedes. In the Jaguar Racing camp, a crash for Sam Bird on Saturday – tapped into the wall at the exit of attack mode by Alex Lynn – brought out the safety car to nullify team-mate Mitch Evans's power boost. With DS Techeetah in the middle, just four points separate the big hitters ahead of a punishing series of double-headers to conclude this season, one in which new-found FIA World Championship status has brought with it plenty of governing body-based controversy. ❧



IN THE HEADLINES

RAST-EST LAP RECOVERY

Audi driver Rene Rast looked set for a torrid Sunday after his podium in race one. He ran over the grass in qualifying, was slowest, but still had his time deleted for rejoining in an unsafe manner. From last he remarkably scored a point for 10th, moving to fourth in the standings, thanks to clocking another point for setting the fastest lap, the third time he's done so in his Formula E tenure.

BOSSES IN COVID SCARE

Formula E co-founder Alberto Longo was among a number of championship high-ups forced to fly home or quarantine in a Mexico hotel room after coming into contact with a COVID-19 case during a trip out to a restaurant. This came despite even stricter 'bubble' measures for Puebla amid initial concerns over security in the area.

PORSCHE FALSE FIRE ALARM

The Puebla fire marshals and medics rushed to the Porsche garage in double-quick time ahead of the race on Sunday when a fire alarm had been activated. Fortunately, this time, the red button – given to each team – was knocked by accident and soon reset.

BUEMI SEEKS RADICAL REMEDY

Sebastien Buemi clocked a 60-grid place drop, converted to a 10s stop/go penalty, ahead of the opening race when he called on his Nissan e.dams crew to swap the motor, inverter and gearbox on his car in a bid to isolate the issue causing his poor form in 2021. But it came to no avail, the 2015-16 champion enduring his sixth and seventh point-less races from nine so far.

UNWANTED ADVERTISEMENT

Andre Lotterer has called for Formula E to ditch its trackside sponsorship banners in favour of painted logos to boost safety. Alexander Sims ripped a 40-metre section off when he was squeezed into the wall by the Porsche driver. The section was then traded between several cars. Sims retired and reigning champion Antonio Felix da Costa (below) crashed heavily as the stickers enveloped and cooked their brakes.



RESULTS ROUND 5/8, PUEBLA (MEX), 19-20 JUNE (28 LAPS – 51.882 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Lucas di Grassi (BRA)	Audi/Audi e-tron FE07	47m40.772s
2	Rene Rast (DEU)	Audi/Audi e-tron FE07	+0.497s
3	Edoardo Mortara (CHE)	Venturi Racing/Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 02	+2.774s
4	Alexander Sims (GBR)	Mahindra Racing/Mahindra M7Electro	+10.443s
5	Jake Dennis (GBR)	BMW Andretti/BMW iFE.21	+11.473s
6	Antonio Felix da Costa (PRT)	DS Techeetah/DS E-Tense FE21	+11.624s
7	Stoffel Vandoorne (BEL)	Mercedes/Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 02	+12.022s
8	Mitch Evans (NZL)	Jaguar Racing/Jaguar I-TYPE 5	+12.351s
9	Nyck de Vries (NLD)	Mercedes/Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 02	+12.936s
10	Alex Lynn (GBR)	Mahindra Racing/Mahindra M7Electro	+13.154s
11	Oliver Turvey (GBR)	NIO 333/NIO 333 001	+14.548s
12	Maximilian Guenther (DEU)	BMW Andretti/BMW iFE.21	+15.257s
13	Tom Blomqvist (GBR)	NIO 333/NIO 333 001	+15.442s
14	Norman Nato (FRA)	Venturi Racing/Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 02	+15.756s
15	Sergio Sette Camara (BRA)	Dragon Penske Autosport/Penske EV-5	+16.971s
16	Robin Frijns (NLD)	Envision Virgin Racing/Audi e-tron FE07	+17.942s
17	Joel Eriksson (SWE)	Dragon Penske Autosport/Penske EV-5	+18.285s
EX	Pascal Wehrlein (DEU)	Porsche/Porsche 99X Electric	+3.916s-no tyre declaration
EX	Andre Lotterer (DEU)	Porsche/Porsche 99X Electric	+16.672s-no tyre declaration
EX	Sebastien Buemi (CHE)	Nissan e.dams/Nissan IM03	+17.127s-no tyre declaration
EX	Oliver Rowland (GBR)	Nissan e.dams/Nissan IM03	24 laps-no tyre declaration
R	Sam Bird (GBR)	Jaguar Racing/Jaguar I-TYPE 5	15 laps-accident/suspension
R	Jean-Eric Vergne (FRA)	DS Techeetah/DS E-Tense FE21	12 laps-accident/suspension
R	Nick Cassidy (NZL)	Envision Virgin Racing/Audi e-tron FE07	0 laps-accident/suspension

Winner's average speed 65.288mph. **Fastest lap** Rowland 1m25.172s, 78.318mph.

SUPERPOLE 1 Wehrlein 1m23.780s; **2** Rowland 1m23.838s; **3** Dennis 1m23.879s; **4** Vergne 1m24.282s; **5** Guenther 1m25.095s; **6** Mortara 1m27.217s.

QUALIFYING 1 Wehrlein 1m23.505s; **2** Rowland 1m23.808s; **3** Dennis 1m23.886s; **4** Vergne 1m23.996s; **5** Guenther 1m24.072s; **6** Mortara 1m24.286s; **7** Sims 1m24.425s; **8** di Grassi 1m24.489s; **9** Sette Camara 1m24.706s; **10** Rast 1m24.818s; **11** Lotterer 1m24.832s; **12** da Costa 1m24.881s; **13** Evans 1m24.934s; **14** Eriksson 1m24.992s; **15** Cassidy 1m25.352s; **16** de Vries 1m25.387s; **17** Turvey 1m25.404s; **18** Lynn 1m25.593s; **19** Nato 1m25.730s; **20** Bird 1m25.788s; **21** Buemi 1m25.809s; **22** Frijns 1m26.146s; **23** Vandoorne 1m26.413s; **24** Blomqvist 1m30.568s.

RACE 2 (32 LAPS – 59.294 MILES)

1 Mortara 46m41.685s; **2** Cassidy +4.169s; **3** Rowland +6.912s; **4** Wehrlein +7.296s; **5** Dennis +9.986s; **6** Lynn +10.630s; **7** Guenther +10.968s; **8** Vergne +21.111s; **9** Evans +21.261s; **10** Rast +21.896s; **11** Frijns +22.216s; **12** Bird +27.945s; **13** Vandoorne +28.578s; **14** Buemi +35.720s; **15** Eriksson +41.027s; **16** Sette Camara +41.029s; **17** Lotterer +46.250s; **18** di Grassi +1m26.473s; **R** Blomqvist 29 laps-suspension; **R** da Costa 25 laps-accident/brakes; **R** Sims 21 laps-accident/brakes; **R** Turvey 16 laps-power loss; **R** Nato 12 laps-accident; **R** de Vries 8 laps-accident/puncture.

Winner's average speed 76.188mph. **Fastest lap** Rast 1m25.370s, 78.136mph.

SUPERPOLE 1 Rowland 1m23.579s; **2** Wehrlein 1m23.771s; **3** Mortara 1m23.886s; **4** Vergne 1m23.950s; **5** Dennis 1m24.154s; **6** Lynn.

QUALIFYING 1 Dennis 1m22.816s; **2** Rowland 1m23.052s; **3** Vergne 1m23.204s; **4** Lynn 1m23.212s; **5** Wehrlein 1m23.227s; **6** Mortara 1m23.235s; **7** Buemi 1m23.455s; **8** Cassidy 1m23.499s; **9** Blomqvist 1m23.583s; **10** Lotterer 1m23.636s; **11** Guenther 1m23.640s; **12** Nato 1m23.789s; **13** di Grassi 1m23.984s; **14** Sims 1m24.179s; **15** Bird 1m24.292s; **16** Sette Camara 1m24.445s; **17** Vandoorne 1m24.736s; **18** Evans 1m24.756s; **19** de Vries 1m24.811s; **20** Turvey 1m24.840s; **21** Frijns 1m24.907s; **22** da Costa 1m24.911s; **23** Eriksson 1m25.203s; **24** Rast.

CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Mortara 72; **2** Frijns 62; **3** da Costa 60; **4** Rast 60; **5** Evans 60; **6** de Vries 59; **7** Vandoorne 54; **8** Dennis 54; **9** Rowland 53; **10** Vergne 50.

NEXT RACE

NEW YORK 15 JULY ISSUE

Will Mortara break free at the top in the shadow of the Statue of Liberty?



Palou profits from Newgarden heartbreak

The Chip Ganassi Racing-run Spaniard soon cemented himself as best of the rest behind Penske's two-time champion, and swept in front when the long-time leader's gearbox played up

DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport**
IMAGES

It was in 1999 when Team Penske last went a season without scoring an Indycar win. It was a 20-race season, and Al Unser Jr scored the team's highlight — a fifth place at Cleveland. The former champion and two-time Indy winner had missed three races through injury, while his team-mates, be they Tarso Marques, Alex Barron or the late Gonzalo Rodriguez, were in at the deep end. The team was not so much treading water but drowning. Back and forth between an update of its handsome but winless Penske PC27 from 1998 and the Lola B99/00, the team was also saddled with Mercedes engines

and Goodyear tyres, at a time when Chip Ganassi Racing was proving that the combo to have — for the fourth straight year — was a Reynard chassis, a Honda powerplant and Firestone rubber. Roger Penske is to be respected for his loyalty and his watertight contracts are to be respected, but at that point they were costing the team results.

This, the 2021 IndyCar Series season in which Team Penske has yet to win after nine rounds, is not that. No, The Captain's crew is not getting everything right but, unlike 22 years ago, it does not have three or four balls and chains strapped to its ankles. There's not much wrong with a driver line-up comprising Josef Newgarden, Will Power,

Simon Pagenaud and Scott McLaughlin, the last named's rookie status notwithstanding. Penske, like its rivals, is running Firestone tyres and Dallara chassis. And the Chevrolet-Ilmor engine, while it has some limitations, is pretty much on a par with its rival from Honda Performance Development.

No, what Team Penske is going through now is just an unbelievable spate of misfortune. And with its eight podium finishes being spread between all four of its drivers, it's awfully hard to challenge a Honda-powered Chip Ganassi Racing ace, in the form of series sophomore Alex Palou, who now has two wins, a second, two thirds and a fourth to his name.

Palou couldn't match Newgarden, but was on hand when it mattered to take the spoils.

CANTRELL

...and the Spaniard has taken the lead in the points



At Road America last Sunday, it should have been Newgarden who won. Palou, his nearest pursuer, thought he had something for the Penske driver, but this charming and highly talented man, who should have won Japan's Super Formula in his rookie season in 2019, is a very canny operator. He fully buys into his team owner Ganassi's philosophy of seeing the bigger picture: if you can win, go for it; if you can't, be second; if you can't be second, be third, etc. Chip doesn't like needless wrecks, and so Palou, aware that he's a contender for this year's IndyCar championship, would not have put his car at severe risk against an experienced opponent when he knew that finishing second would boost him back into the points lead. He started the weekend only one point behind Arrow McLaren SP starlet Pato O'Ward, and on this weekend the Mexican's car was decent but nothing special.

Palou, by contrast, would have used that phrase to describe his own car through practice, but he qualified fifth, and by race day he, race engineer Julian Robertson and team technical director Chris Simmons had whittled down their disadvantage to Newgarden. And their progress would continue through the race.

Make no mistake, though, Newgarden was still in the catbird seat. He was flawless. He and race engineer Gavin Ward had found a set-up that allowed Newgarden to score his 13th career pole and his third at Road

America, using Firestone primary tyres. Even 62-time polewinner Will Power admitted that before qualifying fourth, he had not only migrated towards his team-mate's set-up, but had also started to adopt Newgarden's driving style, feeling it better suited the Firestones around this 4.014-mile road course. But just like fellow top-six starters Colton Herta (front row for Andretti Autosport), Jack Harvey (third for Meyer Shank Racing), Palou (fifth) and team-mate Simon Pagenaud (sixth), Power had not quite had the courage of his convictions, and so had tackled the final qualifying segment on well-worn reds.

Herta said after the race that he didn't quite have the pace to tackle Newgarden and Palou, and he spoke the truth. After losing out to Harvey for second and having a brief back 'n' forth with Power on the opening lap, in which the Andretti driver prevailed, Herta found himself being stalked by Palou, who dived up the inside of him to claim third at Turn 1 on lap five.

Palou then pressured Harvey, but it wasn't until the first round of stops that he emerged ahead of the MSR car, when all leading runners switched from the vulnerable softer-compound red Firestones to the black primaries. At this point, Palou was seven seconds adrift of Newgarden, but then Palou's team-mate, NASCAR legend Jimmie Johnson, spun his car and the caution bunched the field once more.

“What Team Penske is going through now is just an unbelievable spate of misfortune”

The restart came at the end of lap 18 of 55, and Newgarden made a perfect getaway, but equally Palou was under no threat from Power, who had to deter Harvey, while Dale Coyne Racing rookie Romain Grosjean passed Herta around the outside of Turn 1 to grab fifth.

Just before half-distance, Marcus Ericsson, who had been running 12th, ran wide, spun and stalled at Turn 3, requiring a second caution. When the pits opened, almost everyone ducked into the pitlane, with Newgarden, Palou and Power emerging in the same order, but Alexander Rossi up to fourth. More significantly, Arrow McLaren SP's IndyCar debutant Kevin Magnussen, the lapped Sebastien Bourdais, and Takuma Sato remained out, and so inadvertently impeded Newgarden's escape at the drop of the green. Palou drew alongside the 'net' leader in Turns 1 and 3, but the Penske driver held him off. Behind them, Power had to stave off Rossi, not helped by the >>

lapped Johnson, who did his best to stay out of the way, but Rossi got held up just enough to lose out to team-mate Herta.

After Bourdais had unlapped himself from Magnussen, Sato passed the Dane for the lead at Turn 5, then pitted two laps later. Meanwhile, Magnussen's car coasted to a halt and parked on the verge, prompting a third caution. Harvey, Conor Daly, Oliver Askew and Pagnaud pitted under this yellow, banking on fuel-saving – or more caution periods, or rain (which was threatening) – reducing the fuel consumption.

At the drop of the green with 18 laps remaining, Newgarden again pulled away from Palou, while at the end of the next tour

“I got it stuck in fifth in Turn 1 and finally got it to go down, but couldn't get it to upshift after that”

Scott Dixon made his final scheduled stop. So as not to hand a win to the six-time champion should there be another yellow, Newgarden and Power stopped next time by, leaving Palou with a 2s lead over Herta until the following lap, when they both ducked in. Palou emerged still behind Newgarden, while Dixon on warm alternate-compound tyres was able to blast past Rossi on the run to Turn 5.

Up front were the off-strategy Max Chilton, Sato and Askew, and after they pulled in the battle distilled once more to Newgarden versus Palou, for they were 5s ahead of Herta, who in turn was 5s ahead



of Power. Then, with just over three laps to go, Ed Jones's suspension failed, causing a one-lap yellow and leaving a two-lap shootout to the chequered flag.

Newgarden had earlier mentioned to his team a brief downchange issue and, heading up the front straight, he suffered another mis-shift. That allowed Palou to get around him to snatch the lead, and the problem worsened. “I couldn't get it to shift into sixth gear,” said Penske's two-time champion. “Then I got it stuck in fifth in Turn 1 and finally got it to go down, but just could not get it to upshift after that...”

Newgarden, who limped home 21st,

added: “I know we had a great car. We were doing everything we had to do. We were surviving the yellows, surviving the fuel game. We had a rocketship. Team Chevy did a good job for us – we had such amazing fuel mileage and good power. I guess it just wasn't meant to be again. We have fast cars; it's just not working out right now. But now we will claw our way back.”

Palou went on to clinch victory ahead of Herta and Power, while Dixon took fourth, after starting down in 13th thanks to damage incurred to his underwing when he struck debris during the last practice session before qualifying. Grosjean had

MAGNUSSEN JOINS GROSJEAN ON THE GRID



There were many sets of eyes on Kevin Magnussen as he made his IndyCar debut at Road America, subbing for Felix Rosenqvist, who hadn't been cleared to pilot his Arrow McLaren SP entry following his shunt in the first race at Detroit.

Straight off his first IMSA win in Chip Ganassi Racing's Cadillac, the ex-Formula 1 driver (left) was 2.8 seconds off his former F1 team-mate Romain Grosjean in opening practice, but come FP2 he had slashed the deficit to the session leader (Josef Newgarden) to 1.6s. This remained Magnussen's

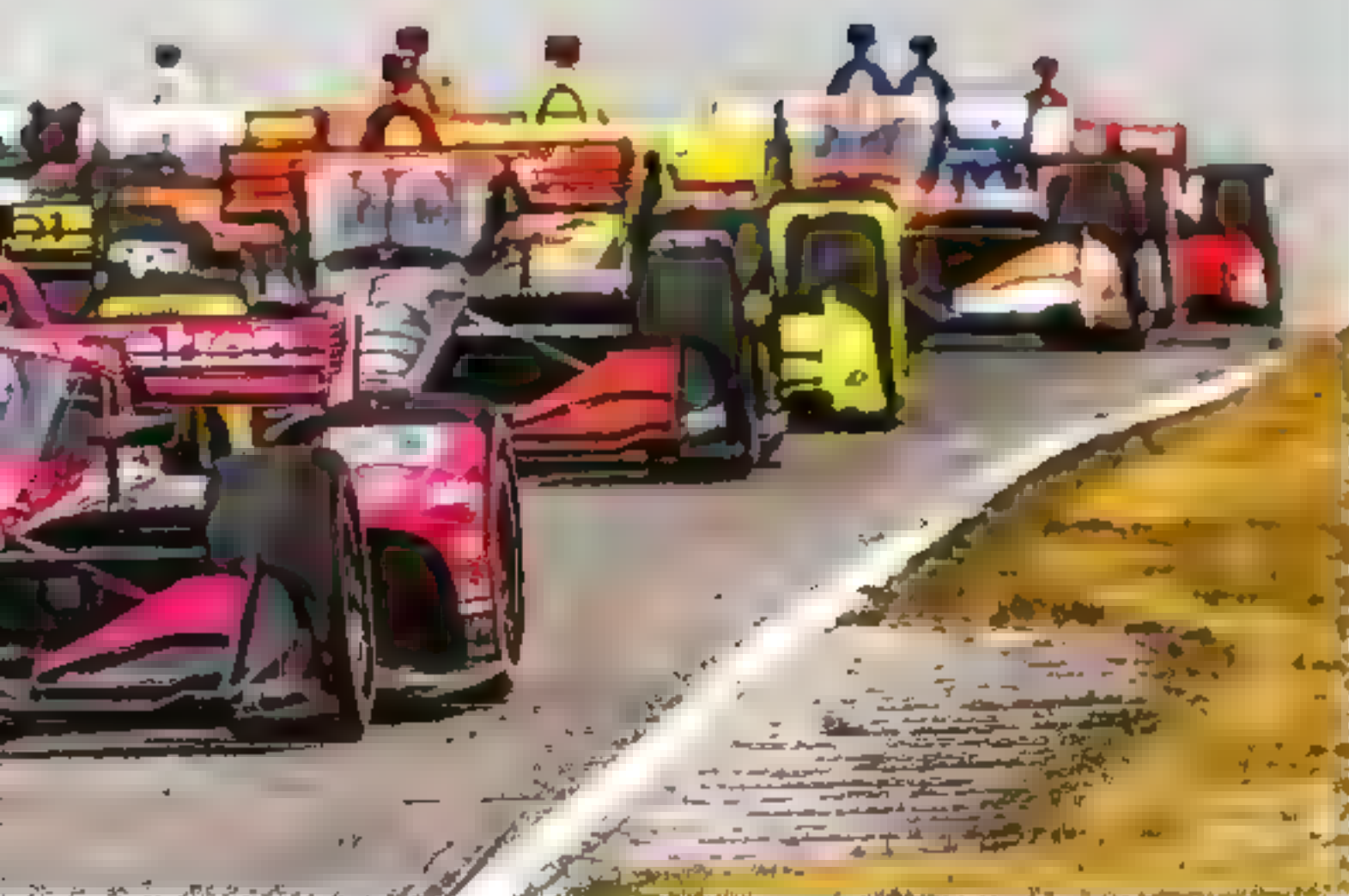
disadvantage to the leader of his Q1 group, Colton Herta, but he was only 1.2s off team-mate Pato O'Ward, which suggests the AMSP set-up was no match for the best Penske, Ganassi, or Andretti cars. Were the Dane to get two or three races in the series, it's not hard to imagine him making the same kind of progress as Grosjean.

Cody Ware, another series debutant, did not disgrace himself in the extra Dale Coyne Racing with RWR car. While he qualified last in Q1, he was only 2.1s away from pacesetter Newgarden. Given that

Road America has a 1m45s lap, and Ware is more used to NASCAR and IMSA, that was not bad at all.

And huge kudos to 2019 Indy Lights champion Oliver Askew. His return to Arrow McLaren SP at Detroit, subbing for Rosenqvist, was always going to be a baptism of fire, given his inexperience at the street course. At Road America, subbing for his former Lights rival Rinus VeeKay at Ed Carpenter Racing, Askew was right back on it, outperforming team-mate Conor Daly. This man deserves another full-time ride.

Newgarden beats Harvey away from the start. The day would turn sour for both



some poor pitstops, but got his elbows out on restarts to deliver a fifth-place finish, apparently intimidated by no one and showing the feisty style people remember from his F1 and GP2 days.

Rossi found his car only worked well on the softer-compound Firestones and was dismayed that due to pitstops forced by caution periods, his time on reds was the shortest of his stints. He finished behind Detroit winner Ericsson, who recovered well from his previous indiscretion.

Palou has retaken the championship lead by 28 points because O'Ward was passed by Sato for eighth on the very last lap, and the Ganassi driver has vowed to continue to fight in the same manner in which he has arrived at this position of pre-eminence.

"You have to be aggressive, and especially here in IndyCar, it's so competitive," he mused. "If you're not aggressive, there's going to be another car that's going to be more aggressive than you. I'm just going to drive as I've been driving. I think it's been working out. I was able to overtake when I can, and I just stayed there without doing stupid passes... It's going to keep going until the last race, I think."*

NEXT REPORT

MID-OHIO 8 JULY ISSUE

The mid-season tour of scenic road courses in the Mid-West continues. Can the Penske team reverse its 2021 jinx on this much shorter circuit?



Herta and Power fought for much of the race, and the American took second

RESULTS ROUND 7/15, ROAD AMERICA (USA), 20 JUNE (55 LAPS - 220.770 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Alex Palou (ESP)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	1h50m55.0534s
2	Colton Herta (USA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+1.9106s
3	Will Power (AUS)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+2.9853s
4	Scott Dixon (NZL)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+3.9048s
5	Romain Grosjean (FRA)	Dale Coyne Racing / Dallara-Honda	+4.7136s
6	Marcus Ericsson (SWE)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+5.1806s
7	Alexander Rossi (USA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+7.7219s
8	Takuma Sato (JPN)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+7.9145s
9	Pato O'Ward (MEX)	Arrow McLaren SP / Dallara-Chevrolet	+9.0243s
10	Max Chilton (GBR)	Carlin / Dallara-Chevrolet	+9.3733s
11	Graham Rahal (USA)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+9.8027s
12	Oliver Askew (USA)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+11.3019s
13	Ryan Hunter-Reay (USA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+11.9378s
14	Scott McLaughlin (NZL)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+12.1930s
15	James Hinchcliffe (CAN)	Andretti Steinbrenner Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+13.9479s
16	Sebastien Bourdais (FRA)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	+14.1169s
17	Jack Harvey (GBR)	Meyer Shank Racing / Dallara-Honda	+15.5945s
18	Simon Pagenaud (FRA)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+16.4614s
19	Cody Ware (USA)	Dale Coyne Racing / Dallara-Honda	+16.9933s
20	Conor Daly (USA)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+17.5558s
21	Josef Newgarden (USA)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+1m30.7894s
22	Jimmie Johnson (USA)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
23	Ed Jones (ARE)	Dale Coyne Racing / Dallara-Honda	50 laps-suspension
24	Kevin Magnussen (DNK)	Arrow McLaren SP / Dallara-Chevrolet	33 laps-lost power
25	Dalton Kellett (CAN)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	19 laps-engine sensor

Winner's average speed 119.424mph. Fastest lap Palou 1m48.5653s, 133.103mph.

Q3 1 Newgarden 1m46.0186s; 2 Herta 1m46.2616s; 3 Harvey 1m46.7206s; 4 Power 1m46.8237s; 5 Palou 1m46.8633s; 6 Pagenaud 1m47.1274s.
Q2 Harvey 1m45.3612s; Herta 1m45.5231s; Newgarden 1m45.6818s; Pagenaud 1m45.7996s; Palou 1m45.8363s; Power 1m45.8570s; 7 Grosjean 1m45.9015s; 8 Hunter-Reay 1m45.9514s; 9 Rossi 1m46.1037s; 10 O'Ward 1m46.1069s; 11 Bourdais 1m46.2225s; 12 Jones 1m46.2270s.

Q1 - GROUP 1 Herta 1m45.7504s; Palou 1m45.8821s; Bourdais 1m46.1085s; Pagenaud 1m46.1281s; Grosjean 1m46.1329s; Hunter-Reay 1m46.3086s; 13 Dixon 1m46.3427s; 15 Daly 1m46.3976s; 17 McLaughlin

1m46.8624s; 19 Hinchcliffe 1m47.0294s; 21 Magnussen 1m47.3776s; 23 Johnson 1m47.7886s.

Q1 - GROUP 2 Newgarden 1m45.6078s; Rossi 1m45.6286s; Power 1m45.6716s; O'Ward 1m45.7681s; Jones 1m45.7968s; Harvey 1m46.0061s; 14 Rahal 1m46.2779s; 16 Askew 1m46.2902s; 18 Ericsson 1m46.4069s; 20 Sato 1m46.5130s; 22 Chilton 1m46.5551s; 24 Kellett 1m46.9786s; 25 Ware 1m47.7324s.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Palou 349; 2 O'Ward 321; 3 Dixon 296; 4 Newgarden 261; 5 Pagenaud 255; 6 Rinus van Kalmthout 243; 7 Herta 242; 8 Ericsson 239; 9 Rahal 228; 10 Sato 206.



First win – and points – in
FIA F3 for Leclerc in France

Leclerc and Doohan take maiden F3 victories

FIA FORMULA 3
PAUL RICARD (FRA)
19-20 JUNE
ROUND 2/7

It was another thrilling weekend of FIA Formula 3 action at Paul Ricard, with three races producing three different winners, including two drivers who took their maiden victories in the category. While Alexander Smolyar and Arthur Leclerc took wins in the reversed-grid races, Jack Doohan took the top step of the podium after a stunning drive in Sunday's feature race.

Mercedes F1 junior Frederik Vesti topped qualifying in his ART Grand Prix car, beating Prema Racing's Dennis Hauger to the top spot. Vesti went quickest on the second runs, almost 0.2 seconds clear of Hauger, who made a minor error on his last lap while

attempting to take back pole.

With the top 12 qualifiers reversed for the first race, that put Calan Williams on pole. The race was epic, with five different leaders. First it was Jenzer Motorsport man Williams, then Logan Sargeant (Charouz Racing System), before Ayumu Iwasa took charge in his Hitech GP car via an off-track move than earned him a penalty. ART driver Smolyar, from sixth on the grid, then hit the front, before he was deposed by MP Motorsport's Victor Martins. Alpine F1 protege Martins looked set to take his maiden F3 victory at his home race after starting 10th and charging through the field, but was passed by Smolyar on the final lap in a dramatic tussle. Williams took his first F3 points finish and podium in third, once Iwasa's 5s penalty was applied.

Leclerc, who started 30th and last after he broke his suspension on a kerb in qualifying, stormed through the pack to

finish 12th, putting his Prema car on reversed-grid pole for the second race. The Ferrari academy driver went on to take a decisive win in that race – his first in F3 – to gain his first points. The Monegasque took the chequered flag 4s ahead of Red Bull Junior Hauger, who leads the standings, in a Prema 1-2.

The Italian team had looked set to take a podium lockout, with Olli Caldwell in third before he was overtaken by Martins on the penultimate lap. Martins therefore took his second podium of the weekend, this time after starting down in 11th.

Doohan was fourth in that race, but saved his best until last. The Australian qualified fourth for the feature race, which took place on a wet track, and dropped to fifth in the early stages at the hands of fast-starting Trident team-mate Clement Novalak. On the sixth lap of 20, he made an opportunistic move to demote both Novalak and Martins as they fought in front of him. At half-distance he was past Vesti for second, and on lap 15 he snatched the lead from Hauger, pulling clear of the Norwegian to win by 1.5s.

Caio Collet bounced back from a tough Saturday to defeat MP and Alpine stablemate Martins to third, while Novalak was another to relegate Vesti, who faded fast as the track dried out.

A virtual safety car was called on the third lap after Caldwell pulled off the track with suspension damage.

Hauger still leads the standings by six points from Martins, who has moved up to second, with Doohan a further two points behind in third.

MEGAN WHITE



Doohan's first F3 win
puts him third in points

Top job Feller! Lambo breaks 2021 duck

**GT WORLD CHALLENGE
EUROPE SPRINT CUP
ZANDVOORT (NLD)
19-20 JUNE
ROUND 2/5**

Since its return to the GT World Challenge Europe schedule last season, Zandvoort has proved a happy hunting ground for the Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo. That is certainly the case for the Swiss Emil Frey Racing squad, which picked up both Sprint Cup victories last weekend to catapult itself into title contention.

It was only a matter of time before Lamborghini claimed its breakthrough first win of the season, with the FFF team having taken a pair of Endurance Cup poles. But perhaps nobody could have predicted the manner in which that first win was achieved, as the sensational Silver Cup pairing of Alex Fontana and Ricardo Feller utterly dominated Saturday's opening one-hour race.

Feller, who topped a stop-start qualifying session, maintained his lead at the start from fellow Silver Cup rivals Ulysse De Pauw (CMR Bentley) and Juuso Puhakka (Toksport WRT Mercedes). De Pauw's Bentley had far superior straightline speed, but he struggled to match the raw pace of Feller, who was seven seconds ahead when the pit window opened.

The Lamborghini emerged from the pitstop phase with Fontana at the wheel and its lead intact, and caught a break when a brief full course yellow was deployed instead of a full safety car for debris.

The Bentley, now with Pierre-Alexandre Jean driving, proved to be a cork in the bottle for the chasing pack in pursuit of the leading Lamborghini. At the head of the queue to dethrone the Continental was the ASP Mercedes of Raffaele Marciello, who had taken over from reigning overall champion Timur Boguslavskiy. Eventually, Marciello found a way past Jean and finished a distant second to Fontana. Frank Bird set



Costa (left) and Siedler came out on top in the second race

SRO BOGAERTS

up Ryuichiro Tomita to claim fourth in the first home of the WRT Audis.

An intriguing game of cat and mouse was teed up nicely following the pitstops in Sunday's race after Marciello established a healthy lead in the opening stint. Leading the chase was the Dinamic Motorsport Porsche of Christian Engelhart and the Emil Frey Racing Lamborghini of Albert Costa.

Now aboard the Mercedes, Boguslavskiy sat on a relatively healthy 11s lead inside the final quarter, but was suddenly slowed by a flat battery, while the Porsche, now with Adrien de Leener driving, had dropped to third by the time it was forced into the pits with mechanical dramas.

That left Norbert Siedler in the lead in the car started by Costa to give Emil Frey its second win on the bounce. Dries Vanthoor was up to second in the WRT Audi started by Charles Weerts, but the superb Feller demoted the Belgian late on, after Fontana had lined the car up 16th on the grid.

STEPHEN BRUNSDON

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Feller and Fontana put in an impressive display

WEEKEND WINNERS

FIA FORMULA 3

PAUL RICARD

Race 1 Alexander Smolyar

ART Grand Prix

Race 2 Arthur Leclerc

Prema Racing

Race 3 Jack Doohan

Trident

GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE SPRINT CUP ZANDVOORT

Race 1 Ricardo Feller/Alex Fontana

Emil Frey Racing (Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo)

Race 2 Norbert Siedler, Albert Costa

Emil Frey Racing (Huracan GT3 Evo)

FORMULA REGIONAL EUROPEAN ZANDVOORT

Races 1 & 2

Gregoire Saucy, ART Grand Prix

EUROFORMULA OPEN SPA

Races 1, 2 & 3

Louis Foster, CryptoTower Racing

INDY LIGHTS

ROAD AMERICA

Race 1 Kyle Kirkwood

Andretti Autosport

Race 2 David Malukas

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Kiwi Lawson's DTM debut bears fruit

DTM
MONZA (ITA)
19-20 JUNE
ROUND 1/8

Red Bull Junior Liam Lawson rang in the DTM's new GT3 era by taking victory in the first of the two 50-minute races at Monza in his AF Corse-run Ferrari.

Heading into the curtain-raiser, there was a fair degree of scepticism surrounding the direction the DTM has taken this year, as extensive manufacturer involvement and thoroughbred race cars were what made the series so popular in the first place. Based on the first impressions from the Italian Grand Prix venue, it wouldn't be wrong to say that the GT3 cars didn't make for a like-to-like replacement for the old Class 1 tourers, and the overall picture was very different to the DTM as we knew it.

That said, some quality wheel-to-wheel battles and an impressive cast of drivers combined to offer a thrilling spectacle. Unquestionably, Lawson stole the limelight in exceeding expectations on his debut race outing in GT3 machinery. The New Zealander had already shown what he's capable of in Formula 2 this year, but not many could have predicted him to replicate that form in a radically different car – not so soon in his maiden DTM season anyway.

After qualifying seventh, Lawson was up to fifth just two laps into the race, before settling into a rhythm behind a train of Mercedes. Aware that he had



more pace than his rivals, he dived into the pits relatively early on lap nine to emerge in clear air, with a series of quick laps thereafter putting him into victory contention. So, when long-time race leader Vincent Abril finally made his own stop on lap 11, Lawson was able to slip past him with ease going into the first chicane.

The result made Lawson the youngest race winner in the DTM's history at the age of 19 years, four months and eight days, eclipsing the record set by Pascal Wehrlein in 2014, and Ferrari the first non-German manufacturer to clinch a victory since Alfa Romeo in the series' ill-fated 1996 season as the International Touring Car Championship.

Alex Albon had a less successful debut in the second of the Red Bull-backed Ferraris, finishing fourth and seventh across the two races. But the Anglo-Thai reported that AF Corse "was chasing an issue for most of the weekend", compromising his chances.

The second encounter was won by the

Abt Audi of established GT3 ace Kelvin van der Linde after an early battle between Lawson, Nico Muller (Audi) and van der Linde's brother Sheldon (BMW) allowed him to escape up front. The result represented a turnaround for Audi after a difficult opening race, and followed a second Balance of Performance tweak in as many days.

It came as a surprise that Mercedes didn't win a race, especially after it locked out the front two rows in first qualifying. Abril and Maximilian Gotz did hand the marque a double podium on Saturday, and Lucas Auer ensured it was represented on the rostrum the following day with a charging drive from seventh.

BMW appeared to be the weakest of the German marques at Monza, but the second round of BoP changes lifted the performance of the M6, with Sheldon van der Linde and Marco Wittmann both finishing inside the top five on Sunday.

RACHIT THUKRAL





Azcona leads the
Hyundai of Farfus

Azcona makes history as he takes first Pure ETCR victory

PURE ETCR
VALLELUNGA (ITA)
18-20 JUNE
ROUND 1/5

Mikel Azcona surged to an historic victory in the world's first all-electric, multi-brand touring car series as Pure ETCR kicked off at Valledlunga.

Azcona and Zengo Motorsport X Cupra team-mate Mattias Ekstrom were the dominant forces in Italy as they won five of the six 'Battle' races held in their e-Racers, but both had to face their share of adversity along the way.

Placed in Pool A with five other drivers in Friday night's random draw (Pure ETCR doesn't do qualifying), Azcona won both of his Saturday 'Battles' on Valledlunga's 1.06-mile 'Club' circuit to leap to the head of the standings, an achievement matched by Pool B leader Ekstrom. But disaster struck during Sunday morning's single-lap Time Trials, the results of which would set the grid for the major points-paying pair of

SuperFinals later in the day.

Now competing on the longer 1.99-mile layout, Azcona failed to complete a lap after a puncture-induced spin, while Ekstrom was called into the pits by race control at the end of his 'outlap' after a potential car issue had been flagged. He was allowed to go out again at the end of the session, his time comfortably the quickest of the morning, but was later stripped of his SuperFinal pole after his team were found to have breached parc ferme rules by working on the car during the session.

Azcona started last in SuperFinal A, climbed to third, and was then gifted victory when the Hyundais of polesitter Augusto Farfus and Tom Chilton both retired with punctures (Goodyear insisting that the only tyre issues suffered across the weekend were by teams who did not follow its minimum-pressure guidance).

That left Ekstrom needing to win SuperFinal B from the back to stand any chance of winning overall on a tiebreak. An epic drive that included a rallycross-style two-in-one move to pass first John Filippi (Hyundai) and then the unrelated Luca Filippi (Romeo Ferraris-M1RA Alfa Romeo) brought him to within 0.8s of victory.

Ekstrom therefore missed out on the overall runner-up spot to SuperFinal B winner Jean-Karl Vernay (Hyundai), leaving a delighted Azcona as the winner.

"We've been quick all weekend," he said. "But starting last in the SuperFinal, I wasn't sure I could win. I had very good advice from the team on when to use the Power-Up [Pure ETCR's version of 'push to pass', which takes the 300kW power to 500kW for up to 40 seconds per race at Valledlunga] and it worked out."



Vernay finished as
overall runner-up

WEEKEND WINNERS

DTM
MONZA

Race 1 Liam Lawson
AF Corse (Ferrari 488 GT3 Evo)
Race 2 Kelvin van der Linde
Abt Sportsline (Audi R8 LMS Evo)

PURE ETCR
VALLELUNGA
Mikel Azcona
Zengo Motorsport (Cupra e-Racer)

NASCAR CUP
NASHVILLE
Kyle Larson
Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet Camaro)

NASCAR XFINITY SERIES
NASHVILLE
Kyle Busch
Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota Supra)

NASCAR TRUCK SERIES
NASHVILLE
Ryan Preece
Team DGR (Ford F-150)

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Jordi Gene — a Battle winner in round two — was second behind Cupra team-mate Azcona in SuperFinal A, to seal fourth in the event overall. It marked a strong turnaround by the veteran Spaniard, who had been spun out of the lead fight in Saturday's opening round by Rodrigo Baptista, for which the Brazilian was docked eight points.

Luca Filippi and Romeo Ferraris-M1RA Alfa team-mate Baptista hold fifth and sixth after each was third in their SuperFinal.

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Wheelnut woe prevents van Gisbergen triple

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS
HIDDEN VALLEY (AUS)
19-20 JUNE
ROUND 5/12

Shane van Gisbergen went within a stuck wheelnut of clean-sweeping the Darwin Triple Crown at Hidden Valley.

The Kiwi was well on track to win Saturday's opener after muscling his way past polesitter Anton De Pasquale at the first corner and settling into a comfortable lead. But his good work from the first stint was undone by a stubborn wheelnut during the Triple Eight-run Holden's mandatory stop, the 30-second delay meaning the best he could manage was 13th.

That was good news for Chaz Mostert, who started eighth but found himself running third on the opening lap after surviving a Turn 1 pile-up that took out De Pasquale and other frontrunners including Mark Winterbottom and Scott Pye. He then overhauled Nick Percat to move into second before inheriting a second victory in



Van Gisbergen defeated
 Davison in both Sunday bouts

his Walkinshaw Andretti United Holden thanks to van Gisbergen's wheel issue.

On Sunday, Will Davison burst out of the blocks with two lap-record-shattering pole positions for his DJR Ford on the new supersoft control tyre. But he could not convert either pole into a win, van Gisbergen beating him off the line from the outside of the front row on both occasions

to set up an impressive pair of wins.

Davison could match van Gisbergen on pace, but didn't have the speed to get back past, the veteran forced to settle for two seconds.

Jamie Whincup was third in both of Sunday's races following an underwhelming 12th on Saturday, his margin to runaway series leader van Gisbergen now 221 points.

ANDREW VAN LEEUWEN

Dandelion's Fukuzumi blooms

SUPER FORMULA
SUGO (JPN)
20 JUNE
ROUND 4/7

Dandelion Racing's young Honda star Nirei Fukuzumi took a long-awaited first Super Formula win last Sunday at Sugo.

Fukuzumi qualified fifth in wet conditions, but was much more competitive in the dry and moved up to third on the opening lap with an excellent launch. He picked off a fading Sena Sakaguchi for second early on, and then

set about catching poleman Yuhi Sekiguchi's Toyota-powered Team Impul car, with a one-second gap between the pair until the pitstop phase.

Sekiguchi was the first to dive for the pitlane on lap 17 of 53, followed by Fukuzumi a lap later. But a faster stop and a quicker in-lap served to allow Fukuzumi to rejoin ahead. From there, he was never seriously challenged, and he reeled off the remaining laps to take victory in his 22nd series start by a little under four seconds.

Soon after losing the net lead to Fukuzumi, Sekiguchi conceded another position to the Honda-engined Nakajima Racing machine of a charging Toshiki Oyu, who might have challenged Fukuzumi for victory without a very slow pitstop.

Points leader Tomoki Nojiri (Team Mugen) had a weekend to forget, managing 10th in qualifying, and sixth in the race behind Nobuharu Matsushita and Tadasuke Makino.

JAMIE KLEIN



Fukuzumi stormed from fifth
 on the grid to victory at Sugo

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WEEKEND WINNERS

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS
HIDDEN VALLEY

Race 1 Chaz Mostert - Walkinshaw Andretti United (Holden Commodore)

Races 2 & 3
 Shane van Gisbergen
 Triple Eight (Holden Commodore)

SUPER FORMULA
SUGO

Nirei Fukuzumi
 Dandelion Racing (Dallara-Honda)

BRAZILIAN STOCK CARS
VELO CITTA

Race 1 Gabriel Casagrande
 Vogel Motorsport (Chevrolet Cruze)

Races 2 & 3
 Rubens Barrichello
 Full Time Sports (Toyota Corolla)

Race 4 Ricardo Zonta
 RCM Motorsport (Toyota Corolla)

EUROPEAN RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP
RALLY POLAND

Alexey Lukyanuk/Alexey Arnavtsov
 Sainteloc Junior Team (Citroen C3 Rally2)

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Marquez back to his mighty best in Germany after 581-day wait for victory

MOTOGP
SACHSENRING (DEU)
20 JUNE
ROUND 8/19

The world has changed dramatically in the 581 days between Marc Marquez's most recent MotoGP victories. No one could have predicted what would follow across 2020 on that November day in 2019 when he eased to win number 12 in his sixth title-winning season.

In the 19 months between Valencia 2019 and last Sunday's German Grand Prix at Marquez's stomping ground of the Sachsenring, the Honda rider has been through hell and back. Breaking his right arm in last July's Spanish GP set him on a path it was not certain he would ever

emerge from again as a MotoGP racer.

Three surgeries later, endless hours of rehabilitation and a daily routine far removed from normal, Marquez's return to MotoGP action this April in Portugal was an achievement in itself. But it came as a shock to him, his physical condition further from where it needed to be than he expected and the hopes of a quick return to the front of the grid quickly evaporated.

But coming to Germany, few were betting against Marquez. It's quirky layout of 10 left and three right corners suited Marquez's flat track background in normal times. With a lack of power in his right shoulder his main issue in 2021, the Sachsenring layout held greater significance.

Marquez felt his 10-year victory streak in Germany would come to an end despite

qualifying fifth and showing strong race pace in practice. But rain in the air on race day changed his outlook somewhat – the Honda rider admitting he knew this was "my race" when spots started to land on his visor in the early stages of the 30-lap contest.

Muscling his way past championship leader Fabio Quartararo into second at Turn 1, Marquez led at the end of lap one after a late lunge on Aleix Espargaro – who took the holeshot from Aprilia's first front row in the modern MotoGP era.

Resisting a retaliation on lap two from Espargaro, Marquez entered a lead he wouldn't relinquish to the chequered flag at the start of the third tour.

A master of iffy conditions, Marquez bolted when the rain flags appeared around the circuit. Leading Espargaro by 0.260s at the end of lap eight, he opened that gap up to 1.3s after the following tour. He would grow it to 1.9s after 14 laps.

That rain never amounted to more than a few spots, but it was enough to spook Espargaro, who had Ducati's Jack Miller and KTM's Miguel Oliveira pass him at Turns 1 and 2 on lap 10. Oliveira moved ahead of Miller a tour later and set about chasing down his second-successive win on his improved KTM.

Oliveira steadily chipped into Marquez's gap as the pair countered each other's lap times in the second half of the grand prix, the KTM rider able to get within a second with four to go. But Marquez responded in



Aleix Espargaro led the opening stages, but was soon passed



Marquez is overcome with emotion after his first win since injury



Quartararo now leads riders' standings by 22 points

emphatic fashion, his gap 1.9s at the start of the final lap as he sailed to an emotional win to end his and Honda's drought.

Quartararo was never the victory threat his practice pace suggested, but third after running down in sixth early on was "like gold" to the Frenchman as he extended his championship lead to 22 points over Johann Zarco, down in eighth on his Pramac Ducati in the race.

Brad Binder came from 13th to fourth on the sister works KTM ahead of Ducati's Francesco Bagnaia and Miller, with Espargaro "angry" at an ultimately disappointing seventh. World champion Joan Mir was ninth on the Suzuki after qualifying down in 17th, with Pol Espargaro completing the top 10 on his Honda.

Quartararo struggled with a "different feeling" on his M1 at the Sachsenring, but his result only hammered home the woes of team-mate Maverick Vinales, who was last of the classified runners in 19th having qualified a career-worst 21st. At a loss to explain his problems, tensions appear to be rising between Vinales and Yamaha.

Over at Honda, the overriding emotion after the race was one of relief. It's admitted it has come to 2021 with a bike with problems. But Marquez has shown that the machine at least has potential yet to be truly tapped. More importantly, Marquez has proved he's still capable of winning in MotoGP. The world really is slowly but surely getting back to normal.

LEWIS DUNCAN

RESULTS ROUND 8/19, SACHSEN RING (DEU), 20 JUNE (30 LAPS - 68.432 MILES)

POS	RIDER	TEAM	TIME
1	Marc Marquez (ESP)	Honda	41m07.243s
2	Miguel Oliveira (PRT)	KTM	+1.610s
3	Fabio Quartararo (FRA)	Yamaha	+6.772s
4	Brad Binder (ZAF)	KTM	+7.922s
5	Francesco Bagnaia (ITA)	Ducati	+8.591s
6	Jack Miller (AUS)	Ducati	+9.086s
7	Alex Espargaro (ESP)	Aprilia	+9.371s
8	Johann Zarco (FRA)	Pramac Ducati	+11.439s
9	Joan Mir (ESP)	Suzuki	+11.625s
10	Pol Espargaro (ESP)	Honda	+14.769s
11	Alex Rins (ESP)	Suzuki	+16.803s
12	Jorge Martin (ESP)	Pramac Ducati	+16.915s
13	Takaaki Nakagami (JPN)	LCR Honda	+19.217s
14	Valentino Rossi (ITA)	Petronas Yamaha SRT	+22.300s
15	Luca Marini (ITA)	Avintia Ducati	+23.615s
16	Enea Bastianini (ITA)	Avintia Ducati	+23.738s
17	Iker Lecuona (ESP)	Tech3 KTM	+23.946s
18	Franco Morbidelli (ITA)	Petronas Yamaha SRT	+24.414s
19	Maverick Vinales (ESP)	Yamaha	+24.715s
R	Lorenzo Savadori (ITA)	Aprilia	5 laps-accident
R	Danilo Petrucci (ITA)	Tech3 KTM	4 laps-accident
R	Alex Marquez (ESP)	LCR Honda	4 laps-accident

WEEKEND WINNERS

MOTO2

SACHSEN RING (DEU)

Remy Gardner (below)
Ajo Motorsport (KTM)

MOTO 3

SACHSEN RING (DEU)

Pedro Acosta
Red Bull
KTM
Ajo (KTM)



Winner's average speed 99.849mph. Fastest lap Oliveira 1m21.701s, 100.510mph.

QUALIFYING 21 Zarco 1m20.236s; 2 Quartararo 1m20.247s; 3 A Espargaro 1m20.447s; 4 Miller 1m20.508s; 5 M Marquez 1m20.567s; 6 Oliveira 1m20.589s; 7 Martin 1m20.617s; 8 P Espargaro 1m20.659s; 9 Nakagami 1m20.810s; 10 Bagnaia 1m20.811s; 11 Rins 1m20.949s; 12 A Marquez 1m21.135s.

QUALIFYING 1 Rins 1m20.644s; P Espargaro 1m20.700s; 13 Binder 1m20.736s; 14 Marini 1m20.864s; 15 Rossi 1m20.972s; 16 Mir 1m21.014s; 17 Morbidelli 1m21.091s; 18 Bastianini 1m20.953s*; 19 Petrucci 1m21.137s; 20 Lecuona 1m21.154s; 21 Vinales 1m21.165s; 22 Savadori 1m21.411s. *grid penalty.

RIDERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Quartararo 131; 2 Zarco 109; 3 Miller 100; 4 Bagnaia 99; 5 Mir 85; 6 Vinales 75; 7 Oliveira 74; 8 Binder 56; 9 A Espargaro 53; 10 M Marquez 41; 11 Morbidelli 40; 12 P Espargaro 35; 13 Nakagami 34; 14 Rins 28; 15 Bastianini 26; 16 A Marquez 25; 17 Martin 23; 18 Petrucci 23; 19 Rossi 17; 20 Marini 14; 21 Lecuona 13; 22 Stefan Bradl 11; 23 Savadori 4; 24 Michele Pirro 3; 25 Tito Rabat 1.

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Yamaha 159; 2 Ducati 154; 3 KTM 103; 4 Suzuki 89; 5 Honda 77; 6 Aprilia 54.



Tension between Vinales and Yamaha continues to grow

NEXT REPORT

DUTCH GP 1 JULY ISSUE

Yamaha rider
Fabio Quartararo
still holds the
lead of the riders'
standings by 22
points, as the
MotoGP field
heads to the
iconic Assen Circuit
for the Dutch GP.

SEASON
PREVIEW

The girls are back in town

W Series is back this weekend after a year away. This time it's supporting F1, and reigning champion Jamie Chadwick tells us she's up for the challenge of taking another title

MEGAN WHITE

PHOTOGRAPHY



motorsport
IMAGES

SIBLIXHAM



Jamie Chadwick took the first season of W Series by storm, and now she's back and ready to bid for another crown. And with an expanded calendar, a support slot alongside Formula 1 in place of its inaugural season on the DTM calendar, and superlicence points up for grabs, there's even more at stake this time around.

The intended second campaign in 2020 bit the dust thanks to the coronavirus pandemic, so it's been a long wait for the all-female series since Chadwick was crowned the inaugural champion at Brands Hatch in mid-August 2019. That will end this weekend with the first of two successive events at the Red Bull Ring, and the reigning title holder is feeling confident, but not complacent. The confidence clearly comes from that first season with the centrally run, Alfa Romeo-powered Tatuus machinery:

she took victory in the first race of the season at Hockenheim, and scored podiums in all bar the Brands finale. Even so, fourth place enabled her to clinch the title from Beitske Visser by 10 points in what Chadwick described as an "awful" last race.

But this year, facing stiff competition from old rivals and new competitors, Chadwick says she is well aware of "how hard I need to be working if I want to retain my title". Even outside an all-female environment, she is no stranger to victory: she became champion in the GT4 class of the British GT Championship in 2015 at the wheel of an Aston Martin; she claimed the title in the Indian-run MRF Challenge in 2018-19; and she was a Nurburgring 24 Hours class winner in 2019, again in an Aston Martin. That year she also joined the Williams Driver Academy alongside Dan Ticktum, Roy Nissany and Jack Aitken, and took



Chadwick takes nothing for granted in her bid for a second crown

SIBLIXHAM



up a role as one of the team's Formula 1 development drivers, which she has retained.

With no W Series in 2020, the 23-year-old kept her hand in by contesting the Formula Regional European Championship – which used the same chassis and engine as W Series – with Prema Powerteam, and finished as ninth-highest points scorer. So, after traversing the length and breadth of Wales with pre-season W Series testing at Pembrey and Anglesey, she's raring to go for the new season.

"Yeah, I'm definitely feeling confident, but I also think I kind of now know what I need to be working on, and how hard I need to be working if I want to retain my title," she states. "I think definitely it's not making me complacent, if anything it's making me work harder. And that's a really important thing to be focusing on. Not everyone knows what to expect for this year, so I'm utilising that

"Not everyone knows what to expect for this year, so I'm utilising that knowledge"

knowledge. I'm quietly confident that if I work hard enough, and we can put everything in place, then we can win the championship again. So that's obviously the goal, but definitely nothing is taken for granted; there's no complacency going into this year."

Chadwick spent large parts of the multiple COVID lockdowns while she wasn't racing focusing on her training, giving her more time to "properly train and properly prepare" for a

full-on season defending her title as best as possible after she found herself "struggling quite a lot physically in the car at times last year". The Formula Regional-spec car had notoriously heavy steering. Chadwick says that the experience will benefit her in 2021, but "although it's the same car, it's still very different in terms of the way that the cars are run and the tyres".

That experience with Prema came after a 2019-20 winter spent in the Asian F3 Championship, again using the Tatuus chassis and Alfa engine. She finished fourth in that series, but the European environment in FRegional was more beneficial. "Being able to experience the structure, and the way that a team like Prema work, I think that's helped me a lot," she points out. "The added experience, combined with the fact that I went to a few of the tracks that we're going to be racing at this year, definitely made a positive difference >>



GBSON/W SERIES

“The stakes are higher, which is going to make all of us push harder”

for me this year. From a personal point of view it really helped me develop. And also, you know, the team-mates that I had are young guns that are really up and coming [champion Gianluca Petecof moved into Formula 2 for this year, and Arthur Leclerc and Oliver Rasmussen to FIA F3], so to be able to learn from them as well was a useful thing.”

There’s a lot at stake this year, with W Series holding an eight-event season

in 2021, up from six in 2019, and will branch out from Europe by finishing with dates at the United States and Mexican Grands Prix. Joining FIA F2 and F3 on the F1 support package gives the series a huge profile boost, something aided by the fact that, unlike F2 and F3, it’s free-to-air on television, with a Channel 4 slot in the UK. Fifteen superlicence points are available for the champion, and Chadwick says this “makes the stakes higher

for the championship, which is going to naturally make the competitiveness and all of us drivers push harder, which is what we want to see”.

Asked who she thinks her biggest title challengers will be, Chadwick says: “The list definitely goes beyond two hands of digits. So yeah, I think it’s going to be a tough year, probably tougher than 2019. But I’m sure similar people will be popping up – Beitske,



BINGHAM

BOND MUIR: “WHAT WE’RE ALL ABOUT IS RACING”



BINGHAM

After a first season that “exceeded all of our expectations”, W Series CEO Catherine Bond Muir is very excited to get racing again. In its inaugural season in 2019, W Series was the second most watched motorsport series on TV in the UK, and the second most watched female sport after football. It created what Bond Muir describes as a “spectacle that people were amazed at”.

“I’m feeling very excited that we’re actually back out racing again,” she says. “You know, I think having a hiatus for nearly a couple of years almost makes you forget what we do as a fundamental core – our purpose is obviously to promote women in motorsport. I think we’ve carried on doing that very successfully in the last two years. But what

we’re all about is motor racing. So, frankly, I just can’t wait to get back out on track.”

The Formula 1 support slot is something Bond Muir says will “unquestionably raise the profile of W Series, and it’ll enhance our reach and impact”. As well as its races outside Europe in the US and Mexico this year, she wants to expand into Asia.

“The first year, we had to spend a huge amount of our time explaining what is W Series and why is W Series,” she says. “This year, what we’re going to do is celebrate W Series and celebrate our drivers, and the fact that they’re great athletes. And from my point of view, we’ve got to be telling the stories about the drivers. It’s all about them, rather than what is W Series.”



Alice Powell, Marta Garcia. You just need to have consistency, and the main thing is just making sure we get through the first half of the year when the calendar is so compact."

That's not all Chadwick has to focus on this year, because she's also competing in Extreme E with Veloce Racing (the sister team to her management) alongside versatile sportscar and rally star Stephane Sarrazin. Despite the huge undertaking of competing in two very different series, she says: "I'm really loving the challenge. They're so, so different that it's quite nice to be able to try and take comparisons and things from either. From my perspective, it's just time management, making sure that I put enough effort and energy into each one. But in terms of the dual campaign, they're so different that actually one isn't going to hinder the other too much."

"It's been quite nice so far, because, apart from W Series testing, I had the majority of the first part of the year to focus on Extreme E, before it's going to be a big block of W Series. So I can really separate my focus. But at the



same time, I think both skills are useful. The more training I can do, whether it's in a rally car or on track, the better."

On top of that, Chadwick is undertaking simulator sessions at the Williams F1 team's Grove headquarters, something she hopes will lead to time in the car.

Coming into the start of the W Series, Chadwick is on a roll: she's raced more recently than many of her rivals, and has the experience that comes with being an F1 development driver. If she wins the championship again this year, she won't be able to return in 2022, but would focus on progressing to FIA F3 or, if possible, straight to F2. Such a move along the path to F1 is exactly what W Series was invented to facilitate. ❧



W SERIES PREVIEW

ENTRY LIST

NO	DRIVER
5	Fabienne Wohlwend (LIE)
7	Emma Kimilainen (FIN)
11	Vicky Piria (ITA)
17	Ayla Agren (NOR)
19	Marta Garcia (ESP)
21	Jessica Hawkins (GBR)
22	Belen Garcia (ESP)
26	Sarah Moore (GBR)
27	Alice Powell (GBR)
32	Nerea Marti (ESP)
37	Sabre Cook (USA)
44	Abbie Eaton (GBR)
51	Irina Sidorkova (RUS)
54	Miki Koyama (JPN)
55	Jamie Chadwick (GBR)
95	Beitske Visser (NLD)
97	Bruna Tomaselli (BRA)

RESERVES

- Tasmin Pepper (ZAF)
- Gosia Rdest (POL)
- Abbi Pulling (GBR)
- Naomi Schiff (ZAF)
- Caitlin Wood (AUS)

CALENDAR

RD	VENUE	DATE
1	Red Bull Ring (AUT)	26 June
2	Red Bull Ring (AUT)	3 July
3	Silverstone (GBR)	17 July
4	Budapest (HUN)	31 July
5	Spa (BEL)	28 August
6	Zandvoort (NLD)	4 September
7	Austin (USA)	23 October
8	Mexico City (MEX)	30 October

NEXT REPORT

W SERIES RED BULL RING 1 JULY ISSUE

W Series is back with an expanded schedule and the fierce spotlight that only the Formula 1 support bill can bring. Who'll be first to shine?

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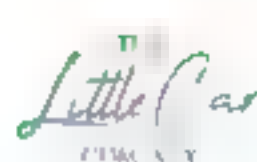
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- Completion of Assembly & Inspection records
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- Assemble and support the build and testing of prototype vehicles.
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- A Mechanical Engineering degree or equivalent qualification.
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- Have excellent communication skills and meticulous attention to detail.

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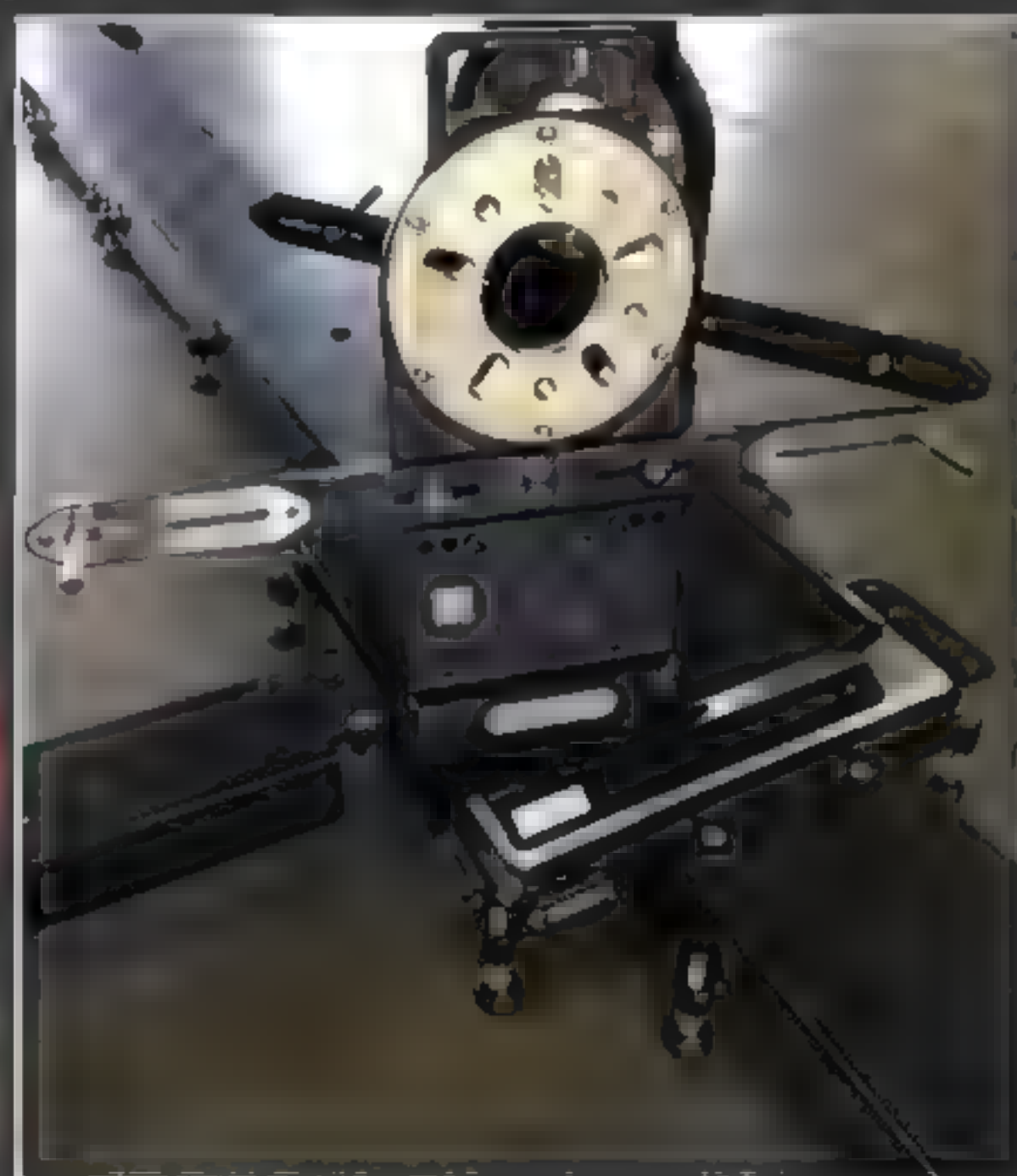
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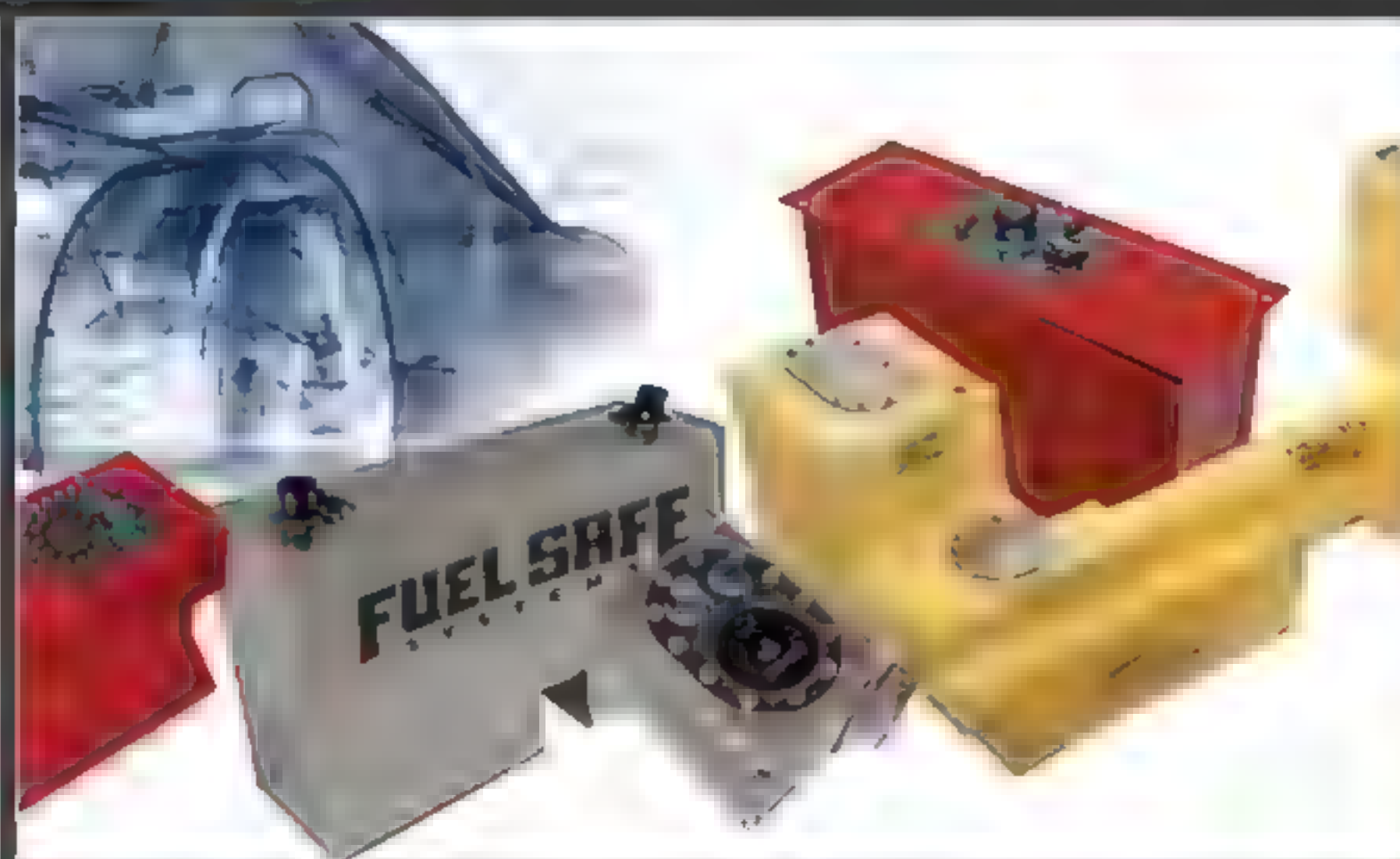
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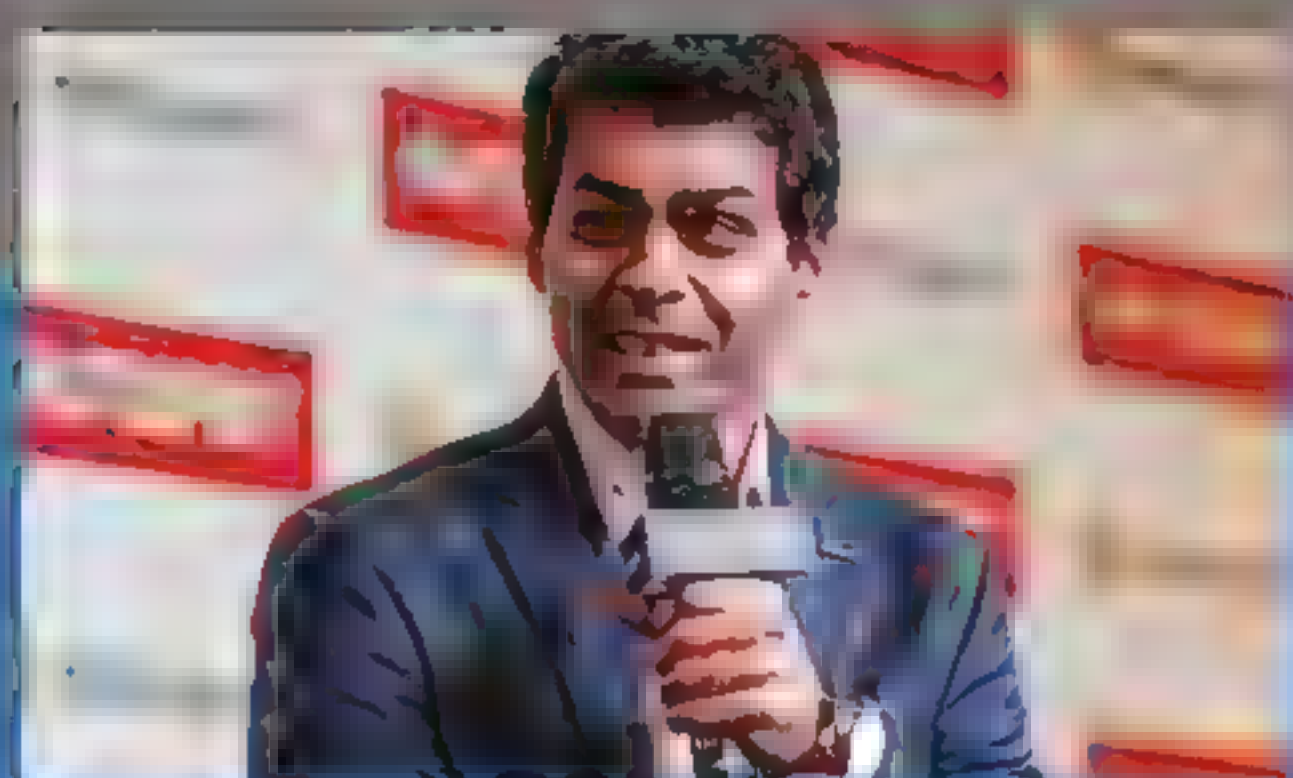
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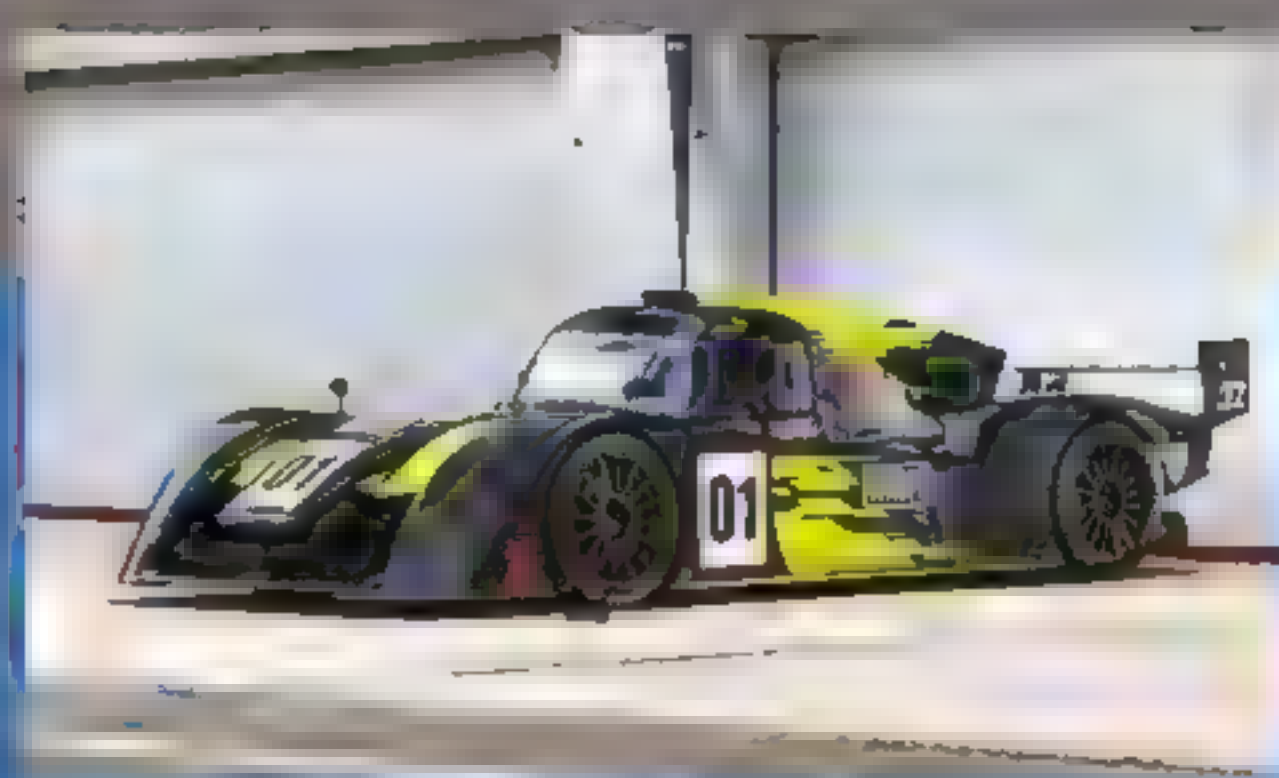
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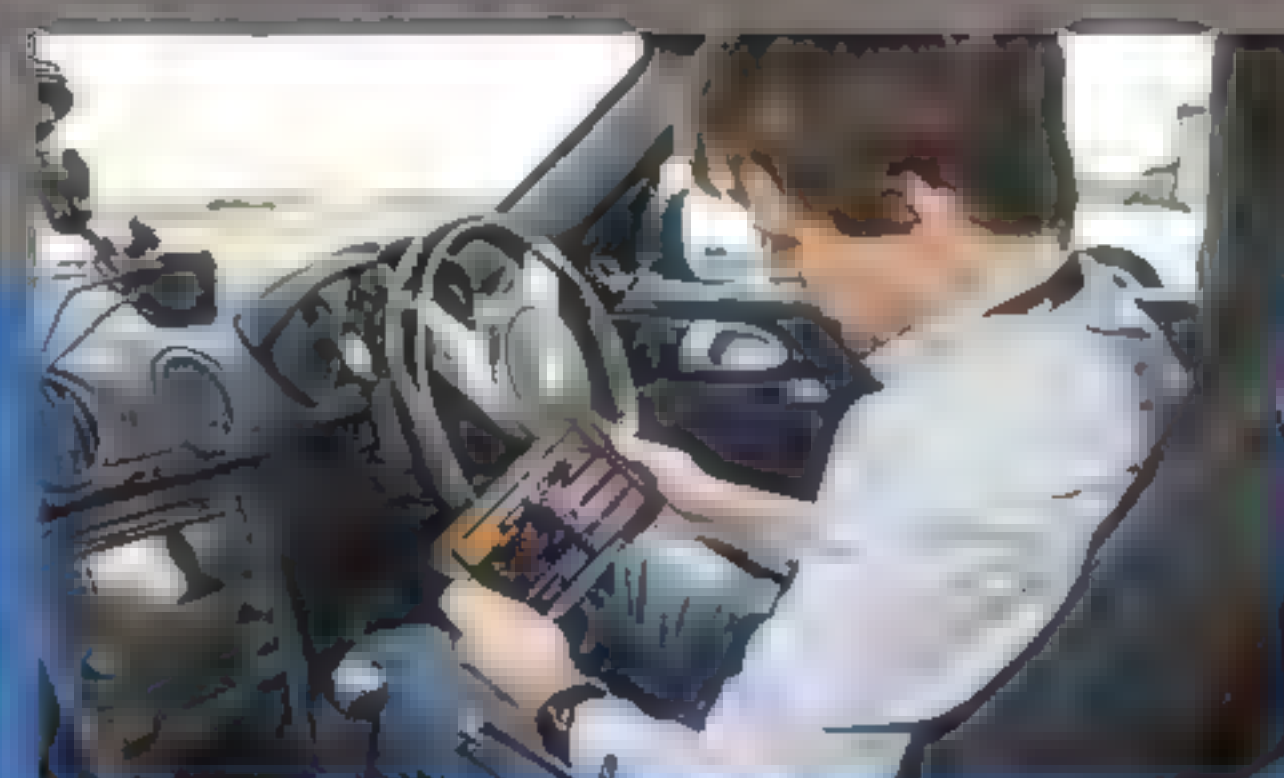
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CHANDHOK BIDS TO IMPROVE UK SINGLE-SEATERS IN NEW ROLE

MOTORSPORT UK

Ex-Formula 1 driver Karun Chandhok is striving to re-establish the UK as a nation where young global talent learns the ropes in junior single-seaters following his appointment on the board of directors of Motorsport UK.

The Indian raced in British Formula 3 from 2002-04 as part of a highly international field but, since then, the UK has largely been eclipsed by Germany and Italy as the preferred destination for young drivers. While Chandhok remains a public figure with his media duties, he has also moved into a role in the sport's administration as part of the FIA Drivers' Commission, and as a drivers' representative on the FIA Single Seater Commission.

"I knew John Ryan [Motorsport UK's sport, safety and technical director, and vice-president of the FIA SSC] from attending the Single Seater Commission meetings together," said Chandhok. "Over the winter, he asked if I'd help MSUK look at a few bits and pieces and asked my opinion, particularly on single-seaters. The contract for British F4 ends this year, so the tender process is coming up for that."

"In the first six months of this year, I've been doing some work with Hugh Chambers [MSUK CEO], and I got to know the rest of the team. I found it enjoyable and rewarding to work with Hugh and the team, and to see the direction he and David Richards



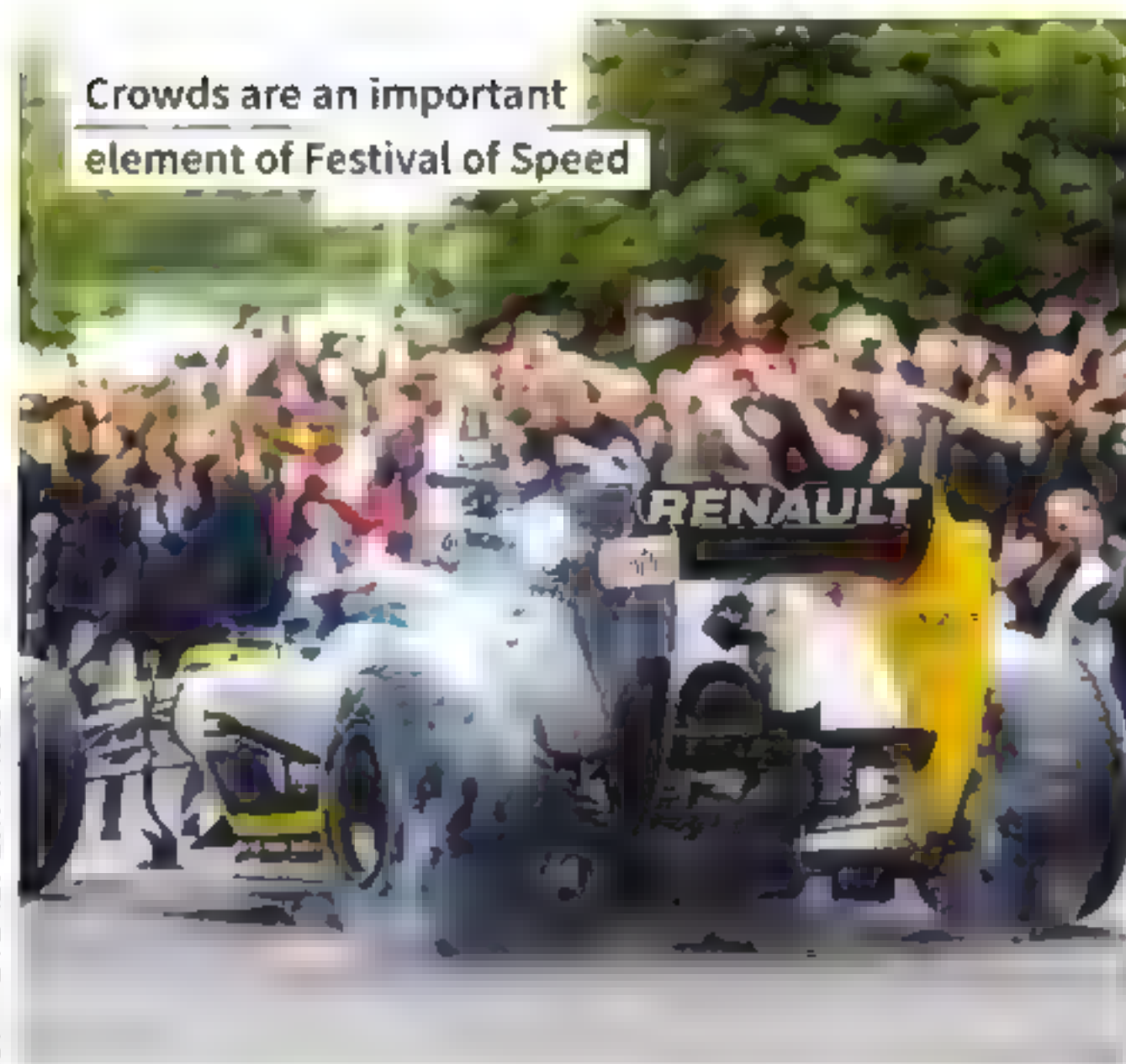
[chairman] are taking."

Chandhok added that Chambers and Ryan want to make the governing body "a more proactive part of motorsport". "I have no interest in playing a passive, figurehead role in anything," he said. "I don't like sitting around talking nonsense and sending a few emails. I get the impression that there's an opportunity to drive real change – it won't happen overnight, but over the next five years. When I came to England, it was *the* place to come. At F3 level that's gone, but you have

to change the point of reference: make F4 what F3 was, so that the Americans, Brazilians, Asians want to come."

As a member of Motorsport UK's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, Chandhok wants to drive change in that area too. "People have said, 'Bloody hell, the sport is 97% white,'" he said. "I grew up in India, so my personal experience is a lot different to the kids we're trying to improve the sport for. But I've spent many years now in the F1 paddock being in the minority."

MARCUS SIMMONS



JEP MOTORSPORTIMAGES

Festival of Speed is a pilot event

GOODWOOD

The Goodwood Festival of Speed will go ahead this year after being chosen as a pilot event as part of the UK government's Events Research Programme.

The news that the final stage of the government's roadmap out of lockdown had been pushed back cast serious doubts over the

viability of the event, given the importance of fans to the 8-11 July extravaganza.

The delayed easing of restrictions until at least 19 July would have limited spectator numbers to just 4000 but, now that the Festival of Speed has been chosen as the first motorsport fixture to be a pilot event, it does not have to stick to this cap.

Instead, all existing ticket holders will be able to attend as planned and a limited number of Thursday tickets are still available to purchase.

As a pilot event, all those attending will have to abide by additional restrictions laid out by the government. Details of these will be sent out to ticket holders in the coming days.

American NP01 makes UK debut in new Zeo category

The NP01 could form the basis of a new series

ZE0 PROTO SERIES

The Sebaco NP01-EVO prototype made its UK race debut in the new Zeo Proto Series at Silverstone last weekend as part of a 15-car grid, and the US machine could form the basis of its own category in the future.

Fun Cup and former Britcar racer Jay Shepherd recently acquired the car and used the event as a shakedown, with plans for the NP01 to have its own UK series by 2023.

"We brought the car to a trackday last week not knowing what it was going to be like," said Shepherd. "They run 50 cars in America. The car weighs 688 kilos and runs a standard two-litre Mazda engine. Overall, the package really does look the part and it drives really, really well. It's

30% or 40% faster than a Fun Cup car and 20% slower than a Radical."

Shepherd believes that the NP01 could prove to be an ideal first step into car racing for karting graduates. "It's really good value for money, for us it's £75,000 turnkey and ready to go," he said.

"We will probably do two or three-hour races to start with, but initially we are going with the Zeo Proto Series because that fits the bill. Ideally, if we can get a class running for 2023, we'll have a transatlantic challenge, probably go over and race the Americans and they can come over here."

Zeo Proto Series founder Duncan Williams, who was in action in his Norma LMP3 machine, was delighted with the variety of cars for the opening weekend,

while also revealing plans for Praga to join the grid at the second round as well as an all-electric prototype in 2022.

"It's just great to see all the different cars out," said Williams. "The Radicals are always welcome and it's also lovely to see the NP01 come and race with us – they will be welcome to have a series within our own, and we think Praga are going to come to the Brands Hatch round."

The inaugural race was won by Matt Manderson in a Radical SR8 after holding off Williams for the 20-minute encounter. Issues for both Manderson and Williams on the opening lap of race two handed the lead to Mike Jenvey's Jenvey-Gunn TS6, which took a comfortable win.

STEVE WHITFIELD

FF1600 standards in question

NATIONAL FF1600

Driving standards came under scrutiny in National Formula Ford 1600 at Silverstone after a collision between title rivals Alex Walker and Max Esterson.

Opinions differed over the crash – declared a racing incident – in race two when Esterson, who had served a five-place grid

penalty for a separate clash with Joey Foster in the first race, collided with Walker on the Wellington Straight.

"I was climbing through the field until Alex Walker squeezed me on the brakes, knocked me off the track and I spun," said Esterson. "I caught back up and he did exactly the same and took himself out. Defending is one thing, but you can't

swerve on the brakes."

But Walker's team boss Kevin Mills felt differently, saying: "In race two we just got hit off by Esterson, just like he hit Foster off. I think the clerk should have been harder on a few things this weekend. They needed a bit more of a reprimand and then the standards would have been a bit better."

STEVE WHITFIELD



Esterson was in the thick of National FF1600 action

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IN THE HEADLINES

CHAMPIONS TO ENDUROKA

Trackday Championship and MSV Supercup class champions Ray Honeybone, Jamie Jeffrey, Martyn Culley, Michael Smith and Matthew Anstiss will all get a fully funded drive in the 12-hour EnduroKa event at Snetterton this weekend as part of their title-winning prize. The quintet will share the Moores Motors Ka in the '12 Heures du Norfolk' contest.

JOHN LEFFLER

Mini Cooper S graduate John Leffler, winner of Australia's 1973 Formula Ford Driver To Europe series driving a Bowin P6F designed by former Team Lotus engineer John Joyce, has died. Leffler also won the 1976 Australian Drivers' Championship in an F5000 Lola T400, but did not turn his back on touring cars, finishing second in the 1978 Bathurst 1000 with Allan Grice in a Holden Torana.

GRANT'S PLANS THWARTED

Double Historic Formula Ford champion Callum Grant was denied an outing in his new modern car by a broken driveshaft at Oulton Park last weekend. Grant had entered the Van Diemen JL15 into the Northern Formula Ford round, but the car's driveshaft detached during practice and the Grant family team was unable to repair it. Grant has previously raced a Van Diemen RF99 run by B-M Racing at the Walter Hayes Trophy, but the JL15 is the newest car that the Bolton driver has tried. He hopes to bring it out again later in the year.

ROMANEK'S SILVERSTONE OFF

Kevin Mills Racing Spectrum driver Lucas Romanek escaped injury in this nasty crash at Luffield during the final National Formula Ford 1600 race at Silverstone last weekend. Romanek's off led to the race ending early after 10 of the planned 15 minutes. Romanek had taken a best result of fifth in the opening contest.



R Racing set to appeal 70-point penalty for star rookie Voisin

GINETTA JUNIOR

Leading Ginetta Junior team R Racing plans to appeal the 70-point deduction for star rookie Callum Voisin after a technical illegality at Snetterton.

Voisin has been one of the stand-out drivers in the opening events of the season, grabbing an impressive win in his maiden car racing event at Thruxton before taking the spoils in the opening Norfolk contest after a penalty for team-mate Tom Edgar.

But Voisin was excluded from his fourth place in race two due to a cam-timing irregularity on his car, a decision that sent him to the back of the race three grid (based on second race results) and also came with the loss of 70 points.

"What was found, you can't argue as a team that it's wrong," said team co-founder Jamie Ross. "What you can argue is we had no way of knowing it was wrong. It was internal to the engine, which is all sealed from Ginetta so we can't get in there. It could be caused by lots of things. It could've happened by going in the gravel and gravel getting stuck in the belt; it could've happened numerous ways.

"The thing we're appealing is the harshness of the penalty, not the exclusion itself. If it happened in race one, we could've picked up where we left off in race two. It was almost a double penalty, which is another reason to feel the 70 points is a bit harsh."

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Ex-BTCC racer Abbott back to BGT

BRITISH GT

Former British Touring Car Championship regular Hunter Abbott will make his first British GT start since 2016 when he joins the returning 2 Seas Motorsport squad at Silverstone this weekend.

The 40-year-old most recently appeared in the series for the Spa round in a Grasser-prepared Lamborghini Huracan GT3, finishing fifth. Now

Abbott, the 2017 Blancpain GT Asia champion, will team up with Martin Kodric, who claimed the 2018 Asian title, in a Mercedes-AMG GT3 run by the Bahraini-owned team that fielded two McLaren 720S GT3s last season.

Abbott, who entered a round of the European Le Mans Series last year, said: "Apart from a one-off in 2020, it's been almost two years since I last raced, so I can't wait to be back

in British GT. It is going to be tough with the calibre of the grid this year, and our relative lack of seat time, but I can't wait to get started."

Optimum Motorsport had planned to enter a second McLaren 720S GT3 for Nick Moss and Joe Osborne, only to withdraw it when Moss suffered two fractured vertebrae in a GT Open crash at Spa last weekend.

JAMES NEWBOLD

MG Car Club vows to run its own fixtures

MGCC

The MG Car Club has reaffirmed its commitment to organising and running race meetings next year and beyond, amid a number of new appointments to its board and Equipe Classic Racing moving to organise its own events.

Equipe regularly takes a significant chunk of track time at MGCC fixtures for its popular GTS, Pre-63 and Libre categories, but has decided to operate its own meetings for 2022.

The MGCC is already in talks with a number of guest championships – including those with which it has existing arrangements – to appear alongside its own portfolio of categories next year.

“We wanted to let our members and racing competitors know that we are still planning for 2022,” said MGCC race competitions secretary Mark Baulch. “We’re talking to the circuits and looking at possible dates and what sort of packages they can come up with financially.”



Baulch added that Equipe’s departure is the ideal moment to review the club’s offering, including visiting different venues to the circuits it traditionally races at.

“When a customer of yours says they’re going to do something different, it’s an opportunity to look at things and review,” he said. “We’re looking at all options and considering some different tracks to where we’ve raced in recent years – we’re talking to our championships about which tracks are appealing to them.”

“We have a good relationship with a number of guest championships over

the years, such as the Morgan Challenge and Mini 7 Racing Club. I think what’s important is both Morgan and Mini are British marques, like MG, but we’ve had Porsche and Ferrari race with us in the past. There’s a lot of people out there that we will be talking to in the coming weeks.”

New directors were appointed to the MGCC’s board back in April, with Dave Tynan taking up the chairman role, after controversy over how an alleged COVID-19 breach at the club office was handled by the previous chairman.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Clarke gets outing in Lotus 11 after hiatus



MOSS TROPHY

Former National Saloon Car Cup racer Stuart Clarke had his first race for 11 years at Thruxton earlier this month, when he shared the Lotus 11 sports-racing car driven by former Porsche Carrera Cup racer Mark Cole.

Cole needed a co-driver for the Stirling Moss Trophy race and asked Clarke, who had just renewed his race licence.

“We’re good friends and I wanted to get back out and do something,” said Clarke. “I’d always raced saloon cars before this, and it’s the first time

I’ve driven anything like it. It’s chalk and cheese to what I’ve done before.”

Despite a persistent misfire, they qualified fourth but, shortly after Clarke took over in the hour-long race, he was forced into the pits with a distributor failure.

PAUL LAWRENCE

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Ex-BTCC racer Crees gives the Imp a run at Brands Hatch



Crees to drive newly restored Sunbeam Imp at Goodwood

HISTORICS

Porsche Supercup racer Michael Crees enjoyed a brief opportunity to try Jonathan Bevan's newly restored Group 2 Sunbeam Imp at a wet Brands Hatch last Friday, ahead of some demonstration runs at next month's Goodwood Festival of Speed.

Prepared by Bevan's grandfather, George, near the Kent circuit, the 1000cc machine was used by North London-based Irishman Bill McGovern to complete a hat-trick of British Saloon Car Championship victories in 1972.

It was subsequently sold to Germany.

"I met Jonathan and his father Peter having a cup of tea at Brands in 2019,"

said Crees, who was racing in the British Touring Car Championship at the time. "They told me the incredible story about George and his cars. We hit it off and have been friends since, so to drive the Imp is very special to me.

"Despite the wet, I could feel it just wanted to go. There was a small oil leak which is being addressed, but I can't wait to have a proper drive at Goodwood," added Crees, who is competing in back-to-back Supercup events at the Red Bull Ring from this weekend.

● A feature on the Bevan Sunbeam Imp will appear in Autosport in the coming weeks.

MARCUS PYE

Gould beats Doune hillclimb record

BRITISH HILLCLIMB

Three winners in four rounds and a new hill record topped the British Hillclimb Championship's trip to Doune in Scotland last weekend.

It was Sean Gould (Gould GR59) who won twice, despite missing the first of four run-offs after a moment in the opening class runs. In his final run of the weekend, Gould set

a new hill record with a 34.67s, bettering the 34.76s mark set by Scott Moran in 2014.

In the earlier run-off on Sunday, both Wallace Menzies (Gould GR59) and Alex Summers (DJ Firestorm) went under the old record as Menzies posted a 34.73s climb to beat Summers by 0.01s.

Summers won the first run-off to ensure that

Menzies's early title lead remained at just four points after the trip north.

It was the third hill record to be broken in four weekends, after Menzies broke the Gurston Down mark and Gould set a new Loton Park standard. The season continues at Barbon Manor and Harewood over the first weekend of July.

PAUL LAWRENCE

NEW HILLCLIMB SERIES FOR YOUNG DRIVERS

HILLCLIMB

A new initiative has been launched to get young drivers into hillclimbing in the cheapest possible way, using standard 1.2-litre Vauxhall Corsas.

The Shelsley Walsh Young Drivers Championship will start at the Curborough sprint course on 11 July when at least nine drivers aged between 17-21 will make their competition debut.

To be eligible, drivers must have a valid road licence but not have previously held a competition licence. The post-2000 Corsa models have a maximum price of £3000 including the required safety equipment, and no modifications are allowed.

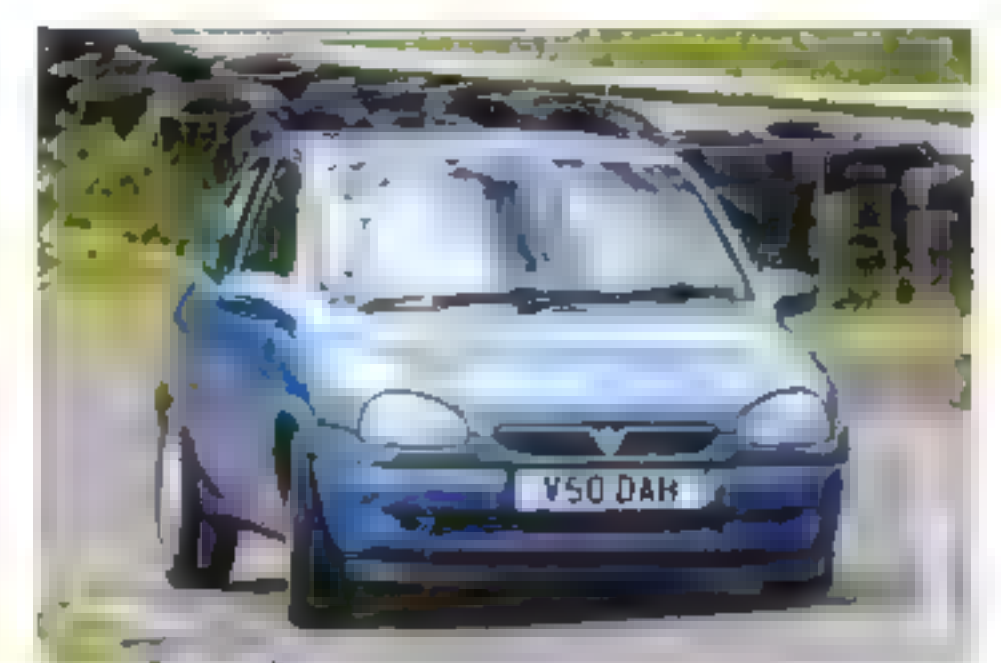
The initiative was prompted by a desire to make motorsport more affordable for youngsters and allow them to compete in a safe environment rather than on the public road. The project has the backing of the Midland Automobile Club and West Mercia Constabulary.

The remaining five rounds will be held at Shelsley Walsh through the summer. Financial support will reduce the cost of getting started and entering events, and the inaugural champion will win £500.

A Shelsley Walsh spokesman said: "Most motorsport is expensive, at virtually every level; consequently, it is difficult for youngsters to get involved.

"For some, the alternative is to use the highways as race tracks, with risks for both drivers and the public. The aim of the championship is to help youngsters learn motorsport in a safe environment and with ongoing mentoring from experienced instructors and competitors."

PAUL LAWRENCE



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Rules need to be the rules

For the third time, British F4 driver Roman Bilinski has hit the headlines for the wrong reasons. And his latest escaping of a ban is the most baffling of all

STEPHEN LICKORISH

We have never heard more about rules and regulations than we have during the coronavirus pandemic. Whether it was criticism of the severity of the rules, frustration over them being confusing and impossible to follow, or anger at people who should really know better flouting them, the rules have never been more in the spotlight.

But this column is not about temporary laws introduced to tackle a devastating virus, instead it's about rules that have been in place for far longer. Specifically, it's about governing body Motorsport UK's regulations surrounding the punishment of drivers guilty of wrongdoing on track. Unlike the tangled web of coronavirus legislation, the rules surrounding licence penalty points seem fairly straightforward: if you pick up 12 points on your competition licence within a 12-month period, your licence is suspended. So far, so simple.

And yet one driver has proved over the past two years that it is anything but. Regular Autosport readers will likely be aware of the case of Roman Bilinski, a driver who in not only Ginetta Junior (in 2019) but also in British Formula 4 (in 2020) managed to accrue 12 penalty points in less than 12 months and yet escaped having his licence suspended. On each occasion, he had picked up two sets of points on the same weekend and, via a rule that is still not written anywhere in the hundreds of thousands of words that make up

“It sends the wrong message out. We’re trying to teach young drivers the rights and wrongs”

Motorsport UK's Year Book, only the highest of these would count towards the tallying up process.

Regardless of the baffling nature of that unwritten rule, which effectively says that once you've committed one offence, you can do what you want for the rest of the weekend without risk of further points counting, it does explain why Bilinski was not banned in 2019 and 2020. But it does not explain why he was allowed to compete in the Snetterton F4 event earlier this month.

Bilinski picked up penalty points at Donington Park, Oulton Park and Knockhill last year, and picked up further sanctions in the 2021 opener at Thruxton. Regardless of the fact that there were two sets of points from both Knockhill and Thruxton, just taking the highest from each venue gives a total of 13. And he should therefore have been given the standard three-month ban. The delayed start

to the 2020 season means the entire campaign was conducted less than 12 months ago, and Autosport is unaware of any of the issued points having been rescinded.

When Autosport closed for press on Tuesday afternoon, we had not received an explanation from Motorsport UK for why Bilinski was able to race in Norfolk. There could be any number of reasons why he was allowed to compete, but all of these would be pure speculation, so won't be discussed here. What makes the situation even worse is that the Carlin driver got involved in yet another collision in the final Snetterton contest and, for what it's worth, was handed a further three points on his licence.

Now, Bilinski is 17 and everyone makes mistakes, particularly at that age. And that does have to be considered, as does the impact of any ban on his individual circumstances. It must also be noted that the majority of his offences have been relatively minor indiscretions that have not been too outrageous. But that's not the point. The point is, during a period of over two years, he has consistently been involved in silly collisions and made clumsy errors of judgement when racing wheel to wheel with other drivers. Despite a noticeable improvement in his racecraft at the end of last year, he still clearly has not learned his lesson. And accruing so many penalty points surely warrants some sort of further punishment. The short, sharp shock of a three-month ban sounds perfectly appropriate, and could be just what Bilinski needs to undergo a reset and develop a fresh approach to battling other cars. But, by not banning him, Motorsport UK has sent out an incredibly worrying message to other teenagers, one that suggests crashing into rivals is OK.

“I'm really angry about the situation and I'm waiting to hear from Motorsport UK for an explanation,” says one F4 team boss. “It's just wrong and something has to be done about it. It sends the wrong message out. We're trying to teach young drivers the rights and wrongs, and Motorsport UK isn't helping.”

There is no doubting that this is a turbulent time to be a governing body as Motorsport UK continues to navigate the sport through the coronavirus-infested waters. It has generally done a very good job of doing so under difficult circumstances. And yet those tricky times cannot be an excuse for inaction or a lack of transparency. If Bilinski is on the F4 grid at Brands Hatch this weekend without a proper explanation being issued to affected parties, the governing body could have an even messier situation on its hands.

No one wants to be issuing bans or severe sanctions to drivers but, when it's necessary, it has to be done. The regulations are in place for a reason, and creating exceptions risks setting a very dangerous precedent. When this is ultimately a matter of driver safety, it means now is the time for action and to follow the rules. Unfortunately for Bilinski, that means issuing an immediate ban. ❧

Foden ends win drought with magical Mazda performance

SILVERSTONE
BRSCC
19-20 JUNE

After a long search for his maiden victory, Steve Foden finally ended the drought with a brace of wins during an action-packed round of the Mazda MX-5 Championship on the Silverstone National layout.

Foden spun down the order in the first encounter in damp conditions, as Fraser Fenwick took the honours after a thrilling six-car lead battle. Following his hat-trick of wins at the opening event, Jack Brewer led early on from Fenwick, who had his AB Motorsport team-mate Oliver Allwood for company behind.

Brewer then ran deep into Maggotts and dropped to fourth, but soon recovered to contest the lead with Fenwick, the pair swapping places several times. But, on the final lap, Brewer was spun around from behind by Allwood and dropped to seventh, allowing Fenwick a clear run to the flag.

Brian Trott moved ahead of Fenwick at the beginning of race two, with a rain shower before the start making the track treacherous. Brewer dropped out of contention after spinning on the exit of Luffield and collecting Zak Oates, and early drama also dropped Fenwick down the order, as a four-way fight developed at the front.

Trott traded the lead with team-mates Allwood and Matt Pollard, as Foden stormed from 19th on the grid to join the battle. Foden then worked his way past the AB Motorsport trio into first, while Trott dropped to fourth after trying to retake Foden into Brooklands. Pollard spun exiting Copse on the final lap, also compromising

Allwood in the process, with Foden pulling clear to take an elusive win ahead of Trott.

Despite leading the early stages of race three, Foden slipped to third after being passed by Trott and Allwood at Luffield. Allwood then took to the front one lap later after going three-wide with Trott and Foden on the pitstraight.

The trio went side-by-side again next time by, with Foden sweeping around the outside into Copse to regain the advantage, which he retained to the finish. Allwood beat three cars across the line to take second ahead of Trott, who took his third podium finish of the weekend.

National Formula Ford produced similarly frenetic racing, with Max Esterson taking his first two wins in the

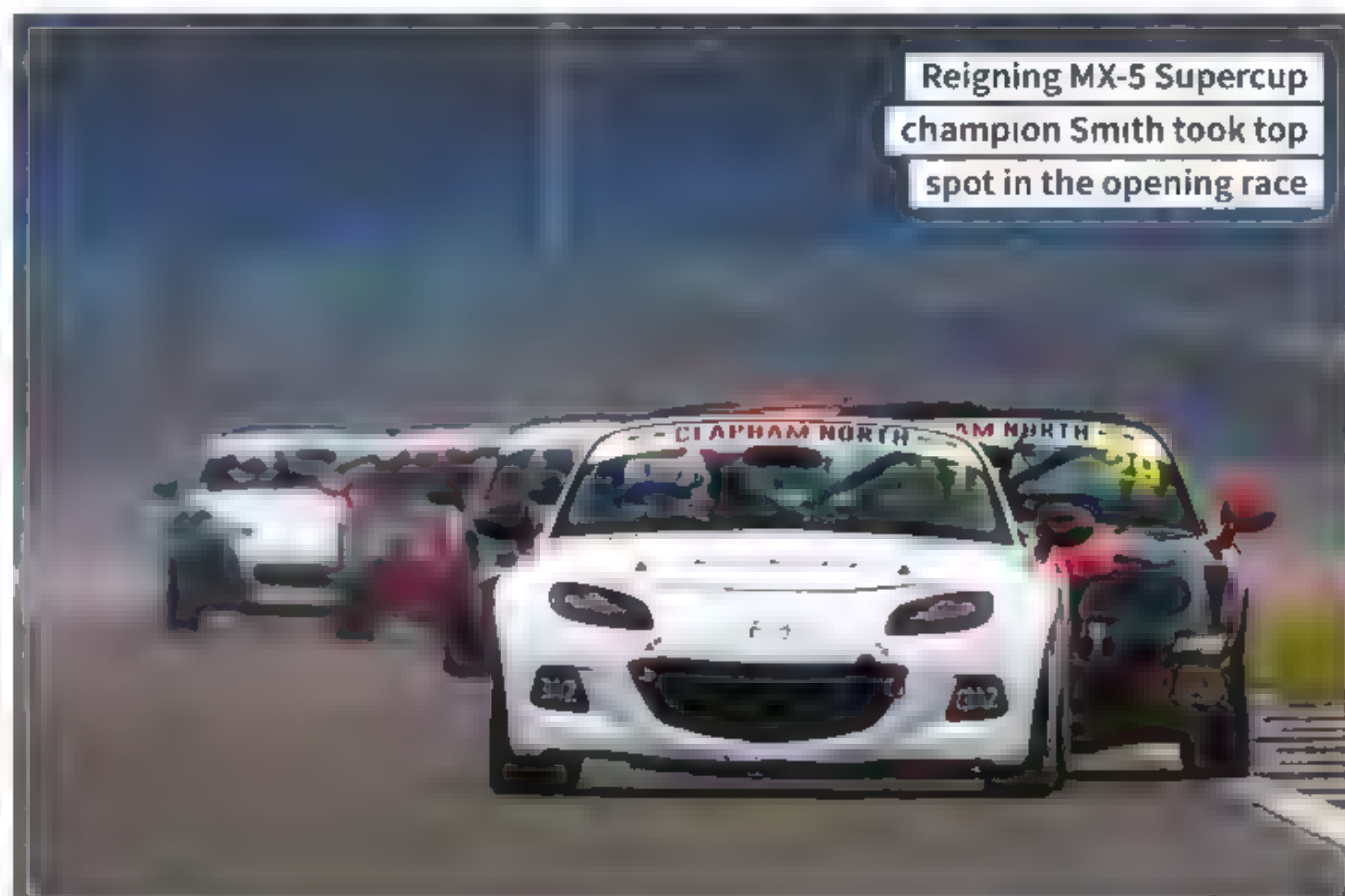
series, despite coming to blows with chief title rival Alex Walker in race two. Three-time Walter Hayes Trophy winner Joey Foster led the early stages of race one in his Firman after setting a blistering pace in qualifying. But he couldn't break clear on a circuit notorious for slipstreaming, with recent David Leslie Trophy winner Chris Middlehurst climbing from fourth on the grid to head a five-way lead battle.

Points leader Walker moved into second, ahead of Esterson, as Foster scrapped for fourth with Formula Ford Festival winner Rory Smith. Foster then started to move forwards again, passing Esterson before lining up a move for second on Middlehurst, who had lost the lead to Walker.

But Esterson spun Foster around at



Middlehurst (l) stopped Esterson from taking a hat-trick in FF1600



Reigning MX-5 Supercup champion Smith took top spot in the opening race



Foden (77) took a brace of wins at Silverstone in the MX-5 Championship

Maggotts after trying to retake third, with Smith also losing ground after taking evasive action. Having come out of the collision unscathed, Esterson passed both Middlehurst and Walker in the space of two corners to take the lead with three laps to go and eventually the win, the trio covered by 0.6 seconds at the line.

The earlier incident earned Esterson a five-place grid penalty for race two, allowing Middlehurst to start from pole on a slippery track. But it was rookie Thomas Mills who surprised early on by leading for Kevin Mills Racing, as team-mate Walker pressured Middlehurst for second. A mistake dropped Mills behind Middlehurst briefly, before he retook the place, with Walker following through into second. The lead trio were

joined in the closing stages by the recovering Esterson and Foster, the latter having started from 10th.

After passing Middlehurst, Esterson tried to take second from Walker on the Wellington Straight, but hit the back of his rival in dramatic fashion. This sent Walker out of control into Middlehurst at Brooklands before making secondary contact with Esterson, who was spun around. Walker retired with broken suspension, while Middlehurst rejoined the lead battle, having remarkably emerged undamaged.

Mills' hopes of a maiden win were dashed on the penultimate lap after running wide at Brooklands, allowing the experienced Middlehurst and Foster through. Mills tried to fight back on the final tour, but had to settle for third, with Middlehurst holding off a charging Foster by 0.086s to take his second win of the season.

Low Dempsey Racing's Esterson passed polesitting team-mate Colin Queen off the line in the reversed-grid finale and built a commanding two-second advantage over Middlehurst, before a big crash for KMR driver Lucas Romanek at Luffield brought an early end to proceedings. Walker recovered from the back of the grid to finish eighth, but it was not enough to prevent Esterson from taking the lead of the championship.

Honours were shared across three close races in the Mazda MX-5 Supercup, with

WEEKEND WINNERS

MX-5 CHAMPIONSHIP

Race 1 Fraser Fenwick

Races 2 & 3 Steve Foden

NATIONAL FF1600

Races 1 & 3 Max Esterson (Ray GR18)

Race 2 Chris Middlehurst (Van Diemen LA10)

MX-5 SUPERCUP

Race 1 Samuel Smith

Race 2 Patrick Fletcher

Race 3 Jack Harding

FUN CUP

UVio/Hofmann's Lotus
(Fabio Randaccio/Scott Fitzgerald)

MX-5 CLUBMAN

Races 1 & 2 Owen Mills

CLUBSPORT TROPHY

David Shead/Malcolm Edeson
(BMW Compact, below)

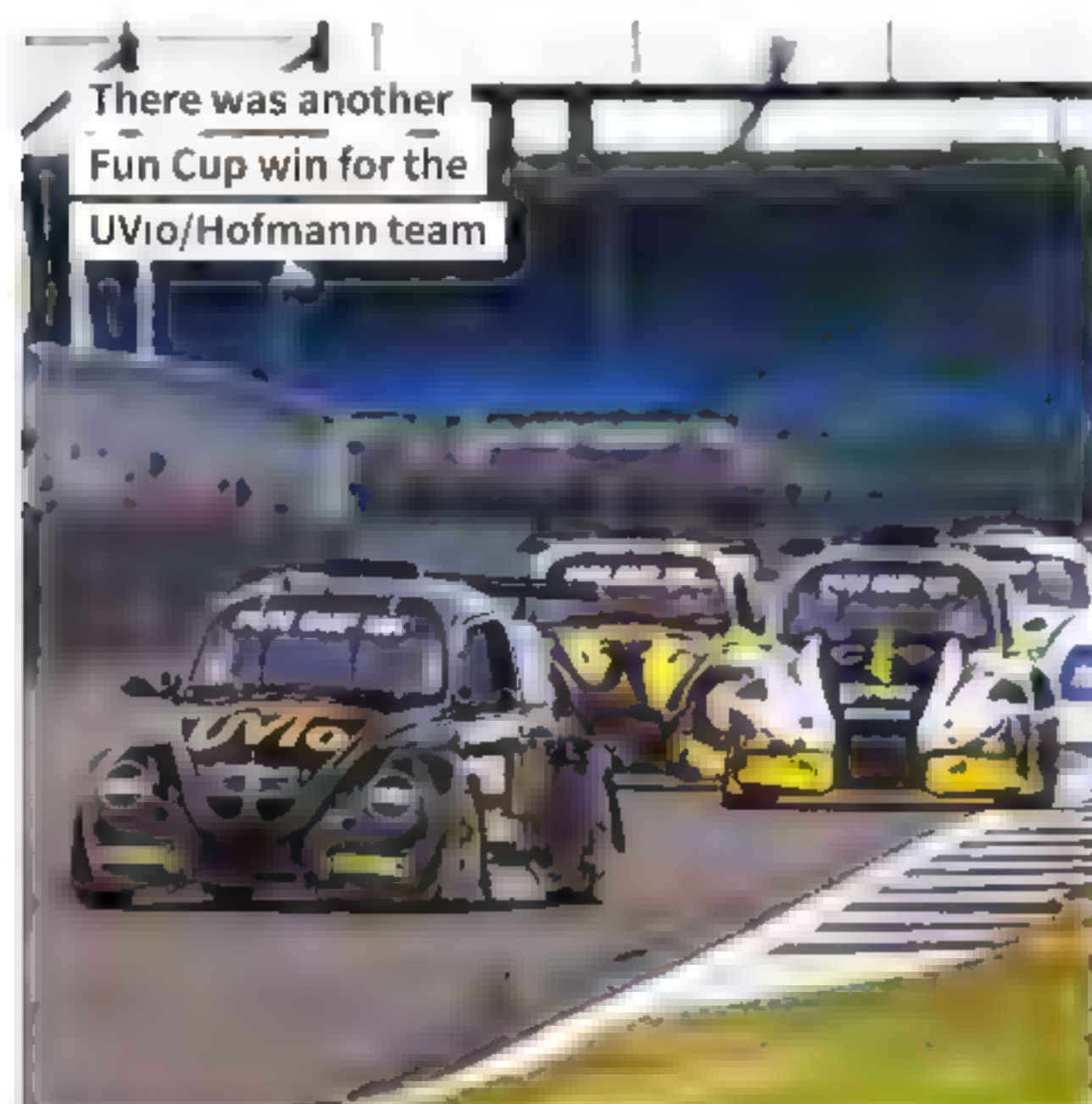
ZEO PROTO CUP

Race 1 Matt Manderson (Radical SR8)

Race 2 Mike Jenvey (Jenvey-Gunn TS6)



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com



There was another Fun Cup win for the UVio/Hofmann team

reigning champion Samuel Smith taking his first win of the season in the opening encounter. Patrick Fletcher came out on top in a battle with Smith to take his third victory of the campaign in race two, which was interrupted by a late safety car period.

Jack Harding took advantage of starting from reversed-grid pole to win race three, beating Smith by less than a second after on-the-road runner-up Adam Bessell was disqualified for overtaking under yellow flags.

Despite starting from the back as a result of their opening round success, the UVio/Hofmann's Lotus crew was victorious once again in the four-hour Fun Cup race.

It took just 20 laps for Fabio Randaccio to climb through the field to the front, but contact with another car necessitated an unscheduled stop to fix a bodywork issue, dropping them over 30s behind reigning champion Team Olympian. But an engine issue put Olympian out at the halfway stage, handing Randaccio and Scott Fitzgerald control of the race and eventual victory.

STEVE WHITFIELD

Gillies continues his ERA of Shuttleworth Trophy victories

CADWELL PARK
VSCC
19 JUNE

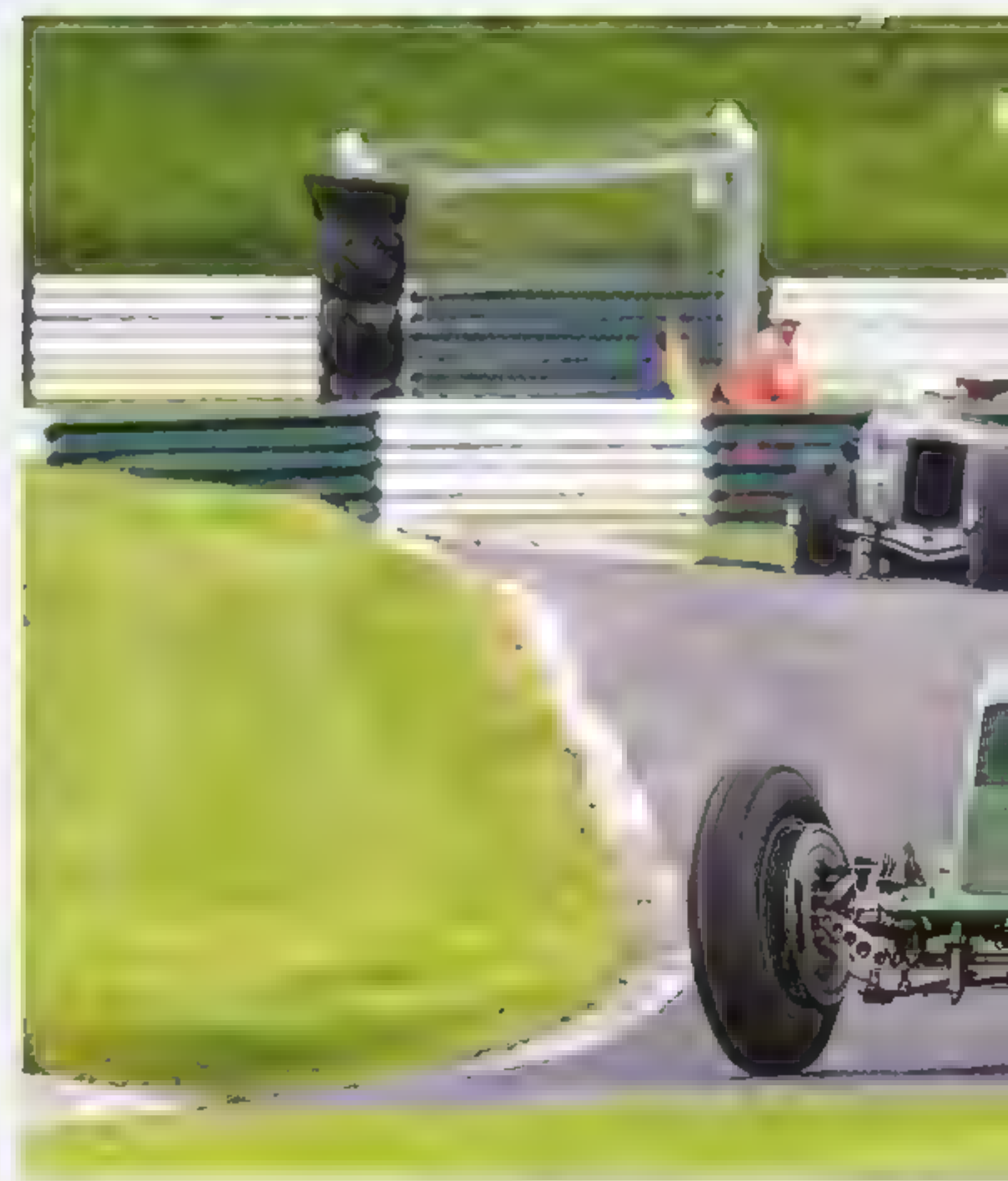
A fine day of racing at Cadwell Park from the Vintage Sports-Car Club was topped by another Shuttleworth Trophy victory for Mark Gillies, who was sublime in his handling of ERA R3A. After a year's COVID-19-enforced absence, the VSCC's annual visit to Lincolnshire drew a fine entry and a healthy crowd – and the racing lived up to expectations.

A quarter of a century after he first won the Shuttleworth Trophy, Gillies was back to dominate the Pre-'61 Racing Car event in R3A. He was able to

edge clear in the early laps as the rest of the field battled in his wake. A damp and slippery qualifying session was not what Fred Harper wanted in the Kurtis Indy Roadster, but the dry race allowed him to unleash the monster around the twists and turns of Cadwell to work up the order and take second place over James Baxter's Riley ERA.

Alex Ames was a double winner at the wheel of the Halusa family-owned Bugatti T35C. The famous ex-works car from 1927 romped away in the Williams Trophy for Pre-'35 Grand Prix cars as a bumper field of Bugattis assembled thanks to the efforts of Tim Dutton. Ed Williams spoiled chances of a Bugatti clean sweep of the podium by grabbing second in his Frazer Nash from Duncan Pittaway's T35, though there was barely half a second in it at the flag after a great contest.

Ames was back out at the end of the afternoon for the Allcomers racing car encounter, and took his second victory once Ian Baxter had a bizarre delay in his Alta. Seeing a black-and-orange flag on the startline, which appeared to show his race number, Baxter pitted to find out what the problem was. Unfortunately, the flag was not meant for him, and Baxter rejoined after a lengthy delay. He battled back up



to fourth by setting easily the fastest lap of the race, but Ames was too far clear for Baxter to regain his lead.

The Frazer Nash/GN race was another highlight and fittingly went to marque expert Patrick Blakeney-Edwards in his Super Sport. He coped with a chain drama that left only two gears to top a bumper field and finish four seconds ahead of young Ben Maeers in the mighty Parker GN. Maeers and Tom Waterfield had battled hard for second, and only later



Sharp (right) and Blakeney-Edwards had a photo finish in Geoghegan Trophy

Doubles all round at Oulton with unstoppable five

OULTON PARK
BRSCC
19 JUNE

Dominant performances were on show at Oulton Park, with five double victories across the five series in action at the British Racing & Sports Car Club meeting.

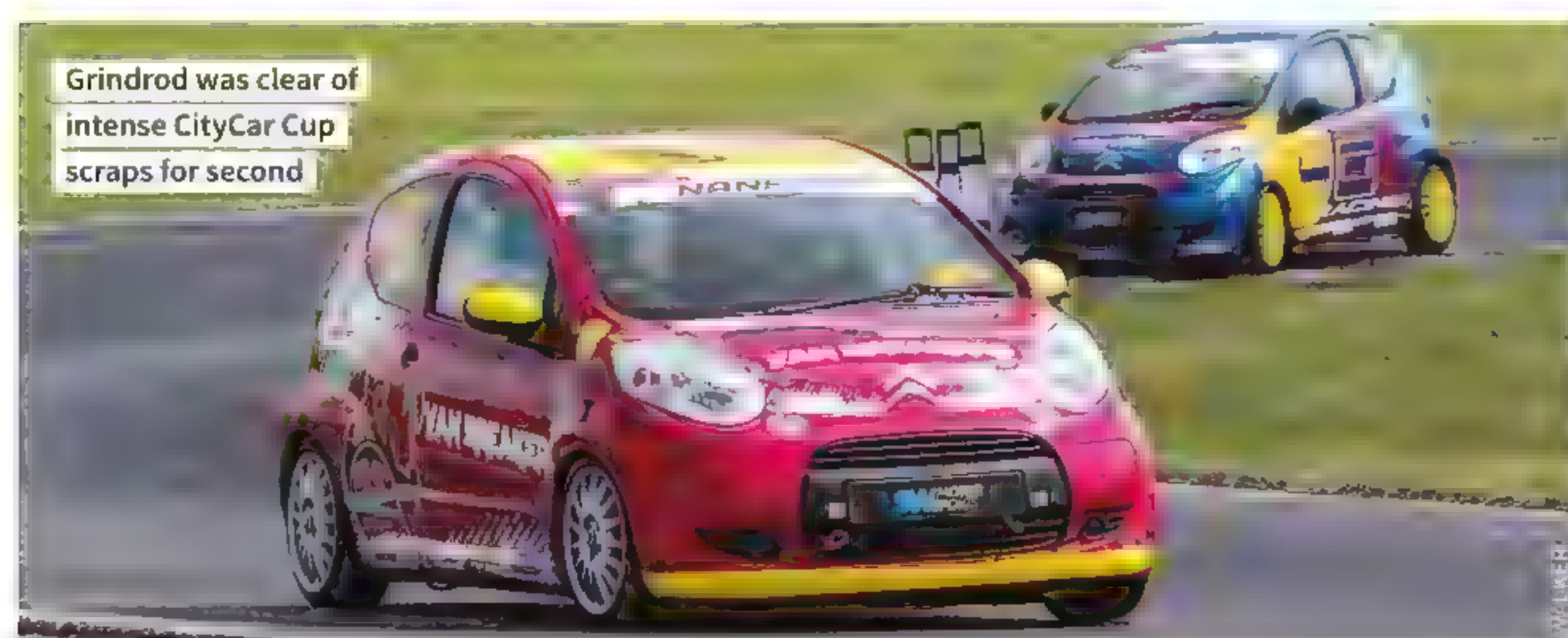
The two Track Attack rounds were the least predictable. Chris Southcott posted what looked like an easy first-race win in his Peugeot 205, one of the older cars

on the grid, but he was helped by polesitter Steve Simpson's 206 being boxed in cheekily at the start between Southcott and the Renault Clio of Nick Gwinnett, who attacked from fourth. Simpson dropped all the way down to 11th place at Old Hall, but he was soon back on the hunt and up to fifth after the first lap. He recovered to second after a lengthy scrap with Mike Nash's SEAT Supercopa, which was third ahead of Gwinnett and the VW Golf of Simon Tomlinson.

Simpson was determined not to let Southcott get away in the second race and kept on the 205's tail, although he was unable to make a passing move stick. Nash briefly challenged him for second before finishing a distant third.

Both CityCar Cup races were won convincingly by Nic Grindrod, who successfully distanced his Citroen C1 from the rest of the field while they fought among themselves. A four-car pack vied for second place, with Richard Bliss (Toyota Aygo) nudging ahead of the C1s of Ross Makar, Andrew Dyer and Duncan Stone. Stone was demoted to fifth from third for a track-limits violation. Dyer, Makar and Bliss finished in that order from a three-way photo finish for second in race two, almost 10 seconds behind Grindrod. Stone had problems and could only manage 15th.

Luke Pinder picked up two strong wins in the Fiesta Championship, despite having been away from motorsport for the best part of a year. He was followed by Zachary Lucas and David Nye in the opener. Lucas



Grindrod was clear of intense CityCar Cup scraps for second



in the race did Maeers edge out a couple of lengths' advantage.

Garry Whyte was remembered in an all-Riley race that went, for the second time, to John Reeve in his Brooklands, while Harry Painter (PA) was the best of the Triple M Pre-War MG field.

The closest finish of the day opened the racing in the Geoghegan Trophy for standard and modified pre-war sports. Jonathan Sharp (Riley) and Simon Blakeney-Edwards (Frazer Nash) battled for the whole

race and traded the lead many times. It all came down to the final sprint out of Barn to the flag, and Sharp somehow nosed ahead by 0.02s after a glorious contest.

The Melville Trophy for VSCC Specials was almost as good, as Dougal Cawley in GN Piglet battled race-long with Rob Cobden's Riley Falcon Special. It was nip and tuck as they dived through late-race traffic, but Cawley got to the line ahead by little more than 0.5s.

PAUL LAWRENCE



was down on speed in race two, so it was Rob Smith who was runner-up, having attacked Pinder and briefly held first place early on. Spencer Stevenson overhauled Nye for third in the closing laps.

The first Fiesta Junior race was shaping up to be a two-car contest between Jenson Brickley and Sid Smith until Smith slid off into the barriers at Cascades on the second lap, triggering a lengthy safety car period. Deagen Fairclough was second in the brief sprint that ensued. George Davis ran as high as third, but dropped to seventh due to crash damage. Albert Webster also dropped out of contention, letting Jake Maynard through to take third.

Smith and Davis were back out for race

two, with Smith on pole. He was quickly reeled in by Brickley and dropped out of the podium spots, while Alex Ley came out on top of a three-car tussle for second, ahead of Fairclough. This was a vindication for Brickley, who had challenged for wins at Croft and been taken off the track.

Jack Wolfenden was streets ahead of the Northern Formula Ford field in his Firman RFR17. Eschewing the National Formula Ford round at Silverstone for something closer to home, he was around 14s ahead of his nearest rival – Neil Patten's Van Diemen RF89 – in both races. Patten was pleased with his results, having not raced for a while.

RACHEL HARRIS-GARDINER

WEEKEND WINNERS



CADWELL PARK
PRE-'61 RACING CARS
Mark Gillies (ERA R3A)

PRE-'61 GRAND PRIX CARS
Alex Ames (Bugatti T35C)

ALLCOMERS SCRATCH
Alex Ames (Bugatti T35C)

FRAZER NASH/GN
Patrick Blakeney-Edwards (Super Sport)

RILEYS
John Reeve (Brooklands)

PRE-WAR MGs
Harry Painter (PA)

PRE-WAR SPORTS
Jonathan Sharp (Riley 12/4)

VSCC SPECIALS
Dougal Cawley (GN Piglet, above)

ALLCOMERS HANDICAP
Race 1 Simon Gallon (Austin 7)
Race 2 William Twelvetrees (Wolseley 16/20)

For full results visit: theresultslive.co.uk

OULTON PARK
TRACK ATTACK RACE CLUB
Races 1 & 2 Chris Southcott (Peugeot 205)

CITYCAR CUP
Races 1 & 2 Nic Grindrod (Citroen C1)

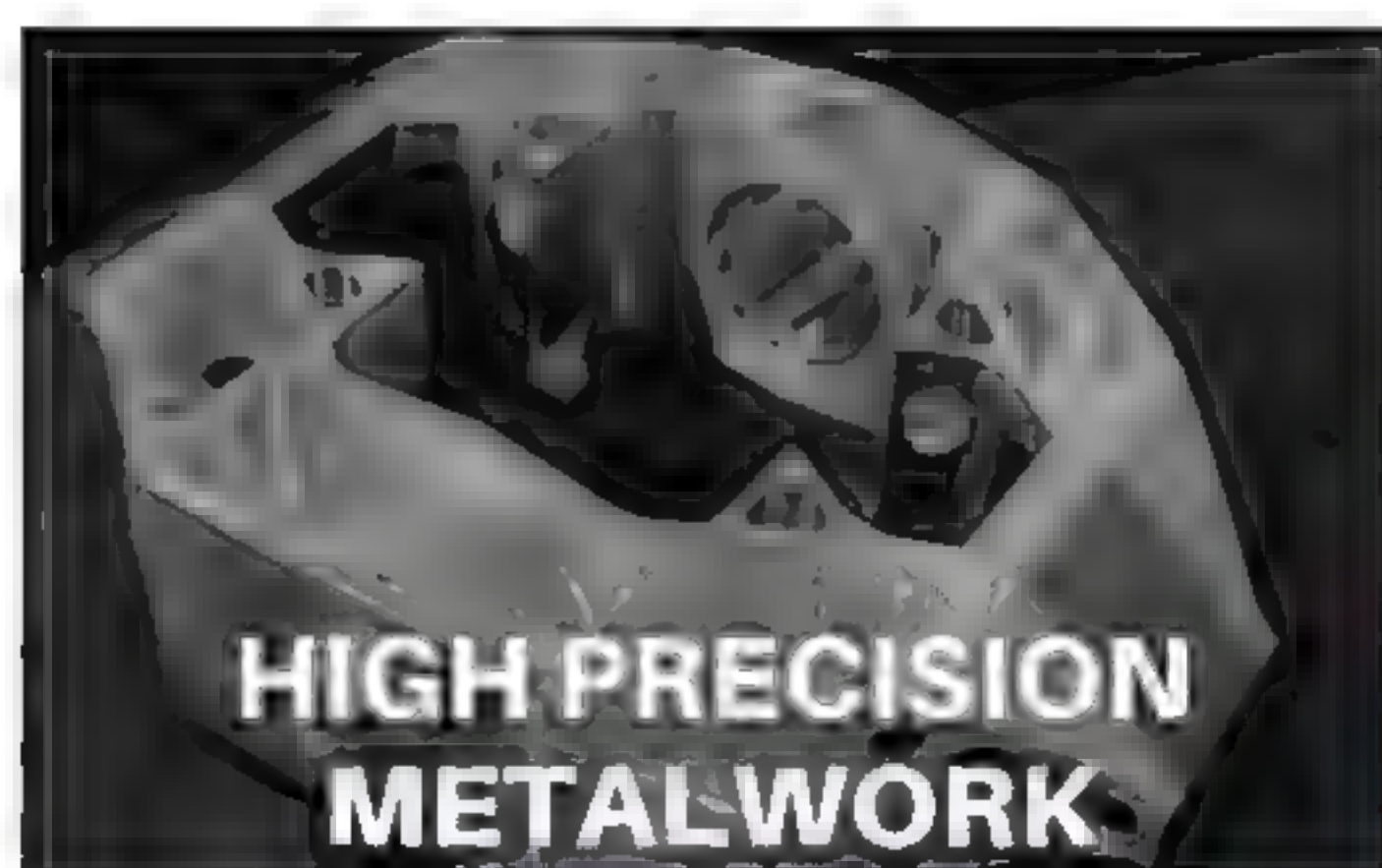
FIESTAS
Races 1 & 2 Luke Pinder (ST180, below)

FIESTA JUNIORS
Races 1 & 2 Jenson Brickley

NORTHERN & SUPER CLASSIC FORMULA FORD 1600
Races 1 & 2 Jack Wolfenden (Firman RFR17)

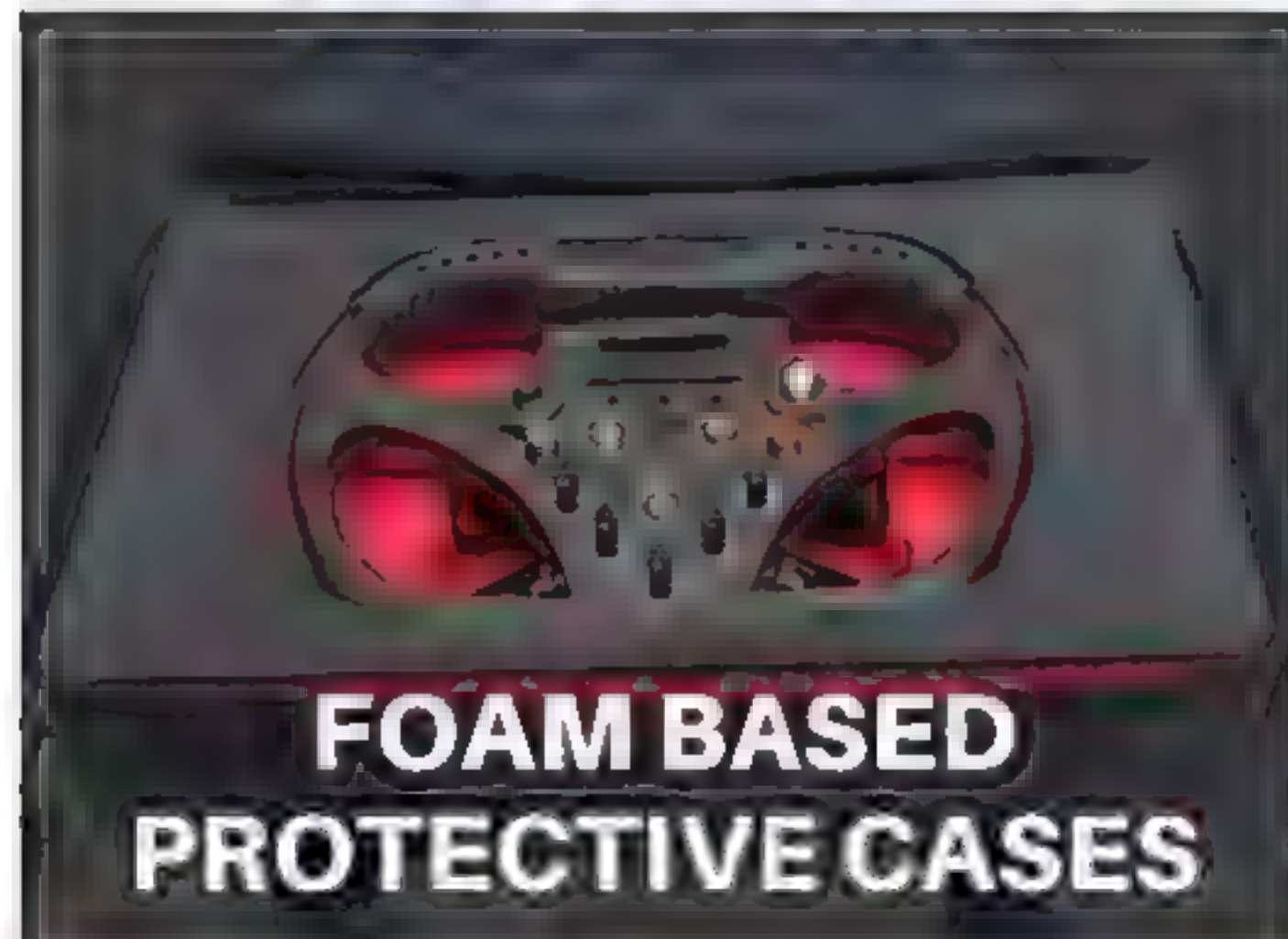


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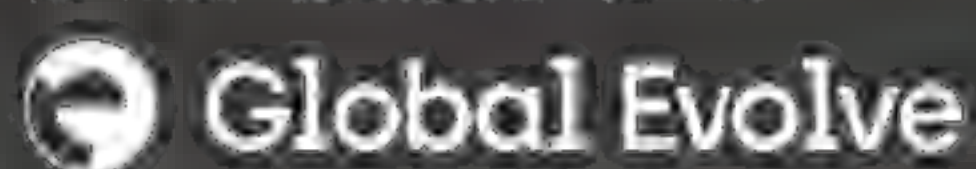
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Mason denies Black the McCosh Trophy

KNOCKHILL
KMSC
19-20 JUNE

The season-opening Knockhill Motor Sports Club meeting certainly lived up to expectations with two days of thrilling and tense on-track racing, and the ever-changing weather providing tough conditions for the drivers.

The meeting was dedicated to the late Gerard McCosh, a much-loved member of the Legends paddock, to whom a poignant tribute was paid last Sunday afternoon. The Legends delivered as per usual on an emotional weekend with six action-packed heats. Stewart Black looked on course for a full set of victories until an inspired drive from Ben Mason netted him the final win and the Gerard McCosh Trophy.



Black (l) won first four Legends contests but Mason took the finale

Two series also made guest appearances at Knockhill, and the visiting Pickup Trucks were a spectacle. There was some fantastic close racing, Reece Jones coming out on top with two wins after some outstanding driving. Dale Gent and Michael Smith also took a win apiece.

The first Junior Saloons contest, won by Ashley Gregory, was heavily influenced by the safety car. However, race two on Sunday brought the best out of Alfie Jeakins, who

managed to pass Charlie Hand to reach the front late on and hang on to take the win. Local hotshot Chloe Grant drove well to take a solid 13th-place finish in her first meeting at Knockhill.

Eric Holmes and Nev Wood took the Pro driver honours for the Super Lap Scotland main events, the conditions on both days playing a major factor in some of the times and leading to some surprise group winners.

MICHAEL GRAY

Honours shared as TCR UK has bruising Kent event

BRANDS HATCH
CTA
19-20 JUNE

A mixed Tunerfest programme both on and off the circuit brought the third round of TCR UK to Kent for the only triple-header of the year. Always close and absorbing, the racing was sometimes too confrontational. Brothers Lewis and Bradley Kent had a victory each in their Hyundais, and Cupra driver Dan Kirby was a first-time winner.

The first race was red-flagged twice with only six racing laps recorded, and race two had a shortened rerun after an opening-corner shunt. Race three was stopped early when two drivers clashed.

The TCR cars shared the track with the Touring Car Trophy class. Toby Bearne's

Mercedes won twice but there were no finishers in race three. A poorly supported VW Racing Cup division gave success to Jack Depper's Scirocco in two races and his dad Martin in the other.

Three more races scored points in the Civic Cup. Matt Luff dominated the first and finished fourth in the second but retired from race three. Alistair Camp won at Cadwell Park and finished second in race one here, but beached and failed to finish race two. A hard-won race-three victory made up for his disappointment.

Ben Sharpe was the other winning driver. He started the weekend charging from 27th to eighth after engine problems, and followed up by winning race two despite losing much of his advantage in a brief caution period.

BRIAN PHILLIPS



Kirby claimed the win in TCR opener

WEEKEND WINNERS

KNOCKHILL

KMSC LEGENDS

Races 1, 2, 3 & 4 Stewart Black
Race 5 Steven McGill
Race 6 Ben Mason

PICKUP TRUCKS

Race 1 Dale Gent
Races 2 & 3 Reece Jones
Race 4 Michael Smith

JUNIOR SALOON CARS

Race 1 Ashley Gregory
Race 2 Alfie Jeakins

SLS - PRO

Round 1 Eric Holmes (Mitsubishi Lancer E6)
Round 2 Nev Wood (Ariel Atom)

KMSC MODSPORTS

Races 1, 2 & 3 Ron Cumming (Nemesis Kit Car)
Race 4 Paul Brydon (BMW M3)

For full results visit: speedhive.mylaps.com

BRANDS HATCH

TCR UK/TOURING CAR TROPHY/VW CUP

Race 1 Dan Kirby (Cupra TCR)
Race 2 Lewis Kent (Hyundai i30 N TCR)
Race 3 Bradley Kent (Hyundai i30 N TCR)

CIVIC CUP

Race 1 Matt Luff
Race 2 Ben Sharpe
Race 3 Alistair Camp

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

AUTOSPORT
PERFORMANCE

OPTIMISING YOUR DRIVING EXPERIENCE

Data loggers are nothing new, but Garmin's latest device could be a gamechanger in the quest to improve a driver's performance

STEFAN MACKLEY

DAVID SHEPHERD PHOTOGRAPHY

“Good apex.” Over the roar of the Porsche Cayman’s engine, there is at last some positive reinforcement. Something has apparently been done well. While it’s not uncommon to hear a monotonous robotic voice emanating from a device mounted to a car windscreen, it’s not exactly normal to hear it while out on a race track.

Data recorders are nothing new in motorsport. They’ve been used in the upper echelons for decades, and are now a common sight at a grassroots level. Most do the same fundamental job, but the Garmin Catalyst, which was released in 2020 and which this writer tested at Thruxton a few weeks ago, is something a little different: it brings driver performance – and optimisation – to the forefront.

“As far as we can see and know we’re the only company to do that,” says Garmin’s Adam Spence. “Everyone else focuses around collecting data for the car itself and then people have to interpret that. We’ve taken a very different approach, which is we want to coach the driver.

“How are they interacting with the car? How are they changing their

interaction? And can we optimise that to say, ‘This is how you can get better’? It’s about looking at everything you ever do on the track and saying, ‘Let’s pick out the best bits that we can stitch together into a lap you can actually achieve, and let’s put that all together to bring you to that optimum performance’”

Real-time audio cues such as our ‘good apex’ encouragement are just one aspect of the device helping to offer positive reinforcement.

Despite not hearing anything else from the Catalyst during my time on track (hopefully not a sign I was *that* bad), I wasn’t short of advice, with Ben Seyfried, a professional driver coach at Thruxton for more than 15 years, alongside me.

As we quickly find out, the biggest selling point of the Catalyst is accessibility. With an easy-to-use interface, finding the right sub-menu is a doddle, but the real win is how quickly you can access the data and video. That’s something that impressed 2017 British GT champion Seb Morris when he tested the device. “For a driver at my level even I would probably still use it on a track day,” he says. “I wouldn’t use it



Device's key appeal lies in the swift, easy access it offers to data and video



“IT GIVES YOU VIDEO OF YOUR LAST RUN AND YOU CAN SEE VERY QUICKLY WHERE YOU NEED TO FIND TIME”

for the coaching element, I'd use it because of how damn quick it is at accessing the data and the video straight away.

“That saves you so much time. You don't even have to get out of the car; it gives you the video of your last run and you can see very quickly where you need to find time. They've found a great gap in the market because [normally] it takes so long to get out of the car, download the data onto the computer and look at the video. This takes that out, which will give people more track time throughout the day.”

Footage from every lap is saved onto the device and it breaks the circuit up into sectors – nine for Thruxton – allowing the user to not only watch each lap, but skip instantly to the same sector from each lap. My line through the left-hander after Allard, for example, initially leaves me with turning lock as I apply the brakes into the 90-degree right into the Complex. By watching the video I'm able to see how I was positioning the car and improve next time out of the pits.

The same applies for the final chicane, where lap by lap I'm not only applying the brakes later, but also on the correct line into the corner. While I can feel I'm doing this in the moment with the encouragement of Seyfried, it's good to see the gradual progression when played back.

The Catalyst also offers an 'optimised lap' whereby it takes the best sector from each session and stitches them into one video to showcase your 'perfect' lap, essentially showcasing what you're capable of.

Using Garmin's GPS technology, it can also pinpoint your exact location on circuit and suggest whether you're taking the best line, such as if you're turning in too early or using enough of the track on entry or exit of a corner. “The device itself doesn't have any maps loaded – everything that you saw when you went to do Thruxton, the device is building that automatically from what it's seeing and experiencing from both a sensor perspective, to the camera perspective and the GPS,” says Spence. “It's the fusion of that world which is really exciting, because that really is the first time you can see that and you can see it relative from one corner to another corner.”

There is also a lap timer, which indicates in real-time whether you're faster or slower than your personal best, and a three or five-lap variant – this essentially shows how consistent your best laps have been via a percentage, and the lower that number the better.



It's an incredible bit of kit, but as with anything there are limitations. The device doesn't take into account weather, for example, and neither does it factor in other track conditions such as if a corner is off-camber or if the asphalt has started to deteriorate in a certain place.

It also can't differentiate between a front-wheel-drive Renault Clio or a rear-wheel-drive BMW with twice the power. Yes, you can select the car before heading out, but this is to help log your run alongside different driver profiles rather than the device performing differently.

The biggest stumbling block with the Catalyst, though, concerns actually learning a circuit and the fundamentals of driving. Although it's able to improve performance if a driver's basic foundation is poor, such as missing an apex by several feet every lap, it's not able to correct that fundamentally wrong behaviour. Spence is quick to admit that the Catalyst is not aimed at complete rookies, and its primary use is to reinforce good driving that has already been instilled by coaching. “It's not something we would recommend that a complete novice can get this and suddenly turn out to be a very good driver,” he says. “The design is not there to replace coaching, it's there to enhance it.”

Without Seyfried alongside, I certainly wouldn't have built up as much as speed. But as a coaching tool, with its instant access to the data and video, there's no question that the Catalyst will allow drivers to have more seat time. At £899, and compared with other data loggers, it's also reasonably priced, even for the amateur market. Just don't expect it to be that chatty if you're still learning a circuit! 🏁



F1'S HISTORY OF SUCCESS



BOOK REVIEW
GRAND PRIX'S
WINNING
COLOURS
RRP £30

As the title of the book suggests, this

is all about victorious machines — and every car to win a Formula 1 World Championship race is drawn in brilliant detail, from the Alfa Romeo 158 that Giuseppe Farina used to take the flag in the 1950 British Grand Prix, through to the Racing Point RP20 that Sergio Perez drove in the 2020 Sakhir GP.

No corners have been cut here, as artist and motorsport enthusiast Mick Hill has painstakingly hand-drawn each machine. Every detail, from the smallest of sponsor decals to the intricate flicks and swishes of the bodywork, has been included. Hill's images pop off the page with bright, vibrant colours.

With each car shown in a side-on view, turning the pages offers a perfect demonstration of how the cars have developed over the decades, with the introduction of wings, greater cockpit protection,

and a general increase in size the most obvious differences. Even during the same year there are interesting comparisons, such as with the Ferrari F310 and subsequent high-nosed F310/2 that were both used during the 1996 season.

Included with each car are details such as the designers and key personnel, engine and tyre suppliers, and how many poles, fastest laps and race wins it achieved. There's also a breakdown of how each winning driver performed with that iteration of chassis through the season to give an overview of the campaign. Each chapter is broken up by decade, with a brief synopsis of the major events from the intervening 10 years such as the FOCA/FISA battle of the early 1980s, to the death of Ayrton Senna in the 1990s and general technical innovations of the period.

It's not a comprehensive guide to the championship — after all, only cars that have been driven to the top step of the podium are included. As Hill points out though at the start, he's an "artist and not a writer" and that "there are plenty of such books" that recount every

minor detail from every event over the past 70 years.

Without doubt the highlight of the book are the double-page cutaways of the Lotus 79 that Mario Andretti guided to the F1 title in 1978 and the Lotus 97T with which Ayrton Senna took his maiden F1 win at the Portuguese GP in 1985. The level of detail is brilliant, and the only shame is that one is not included in every decade throughout the book, quite possibly because Hill was unable to get access to other machines and therefore unable to provide an extensive breakdown.

It's not just cars that are included, and at the back of the book there is a section on racing headgear used by the drivers, from the cork helmets of the 1950s to the sophisticated lids worn today.

The way the helmets have been laid out, however, is from the front, with an almost mirror image on each side. It's understandable why this decision was made in order to showcase the entire helmet and the flashy designs that have now become the norm, but it doesn't quite work in a printed format, and a side-on view like that used to



WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

Styrian Grand Prix

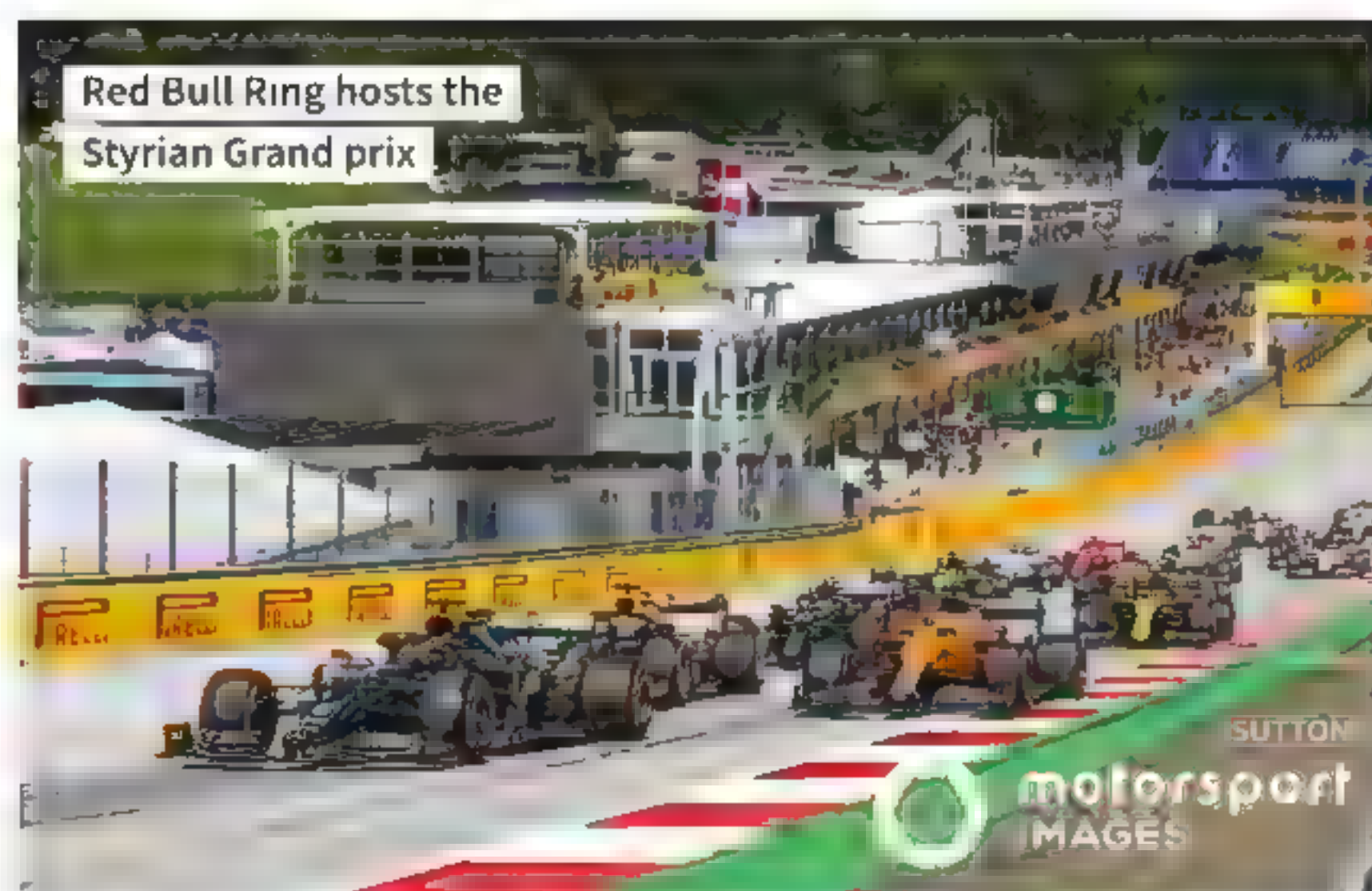
Formula 1 World Championship
Round 8/23

Red Bull Ring, Austria

27 June

TV Live Sky Sports F1,
Sun 1355

TV Highlights Sky Sports F1,
Sun 1730, Channel 4 Sun 1830



Safari Rally

World Rally Championship

Round 6/12

Nairobi, Kenya

24-27 June

TV Live BT Sport 2, Thu 1200,
BT Sport 1, Sat 0700, Sat 1300,
BT Sport 3, Sun 0630, Sun 1100

TV Highlights BT Sport Extra 1,
Thu 1415, Fri 1500, Sat 1545,
Red Bull TV, Fri 2000, Sat 2000,
Sun 2000, ITV4, Wed 2000

IMSA SportsCar

Round 5/12

Watkins Glen, USA

27 June

NASCAR Cup Series

Rounds 18-19/36

Pocono, USA

26-27 June

TV Live Premier Sports 1,
Sat 1930, Premier Sports 2,
Sun 2000

NASCAR Xfinity Series

Round 16/33

Pocono, USA

27 June

NASCAR Truck Series

Round 13/22

Pocono, USA

26 June

MotoGP

Round 9/19

Assen, Netherlands

27 June

TV Live BT Sport 2, Sun 1230

TV Highlights BT Sport 3,
Sun 1900, ITV4, Mon 2200

Porsche Supercup

Round 2/8

Red Bull Ring, Austria

27 June

TV Live Eurosport 1, Sun 1115,
Sky Sports F1, Sun 1125

W Series

Round 1/8

Red Bull Ring, Austria

26 June

TV Live More4, Sat 1500

World Touring Car Cup

Round 2/8

Estoril, Portugal

27 June

TV Live Eurosport 2, Sun 1200



display the cars could probably have worked better.

There are also several pages devoted to fantastic illustrations of stickers from the last 70 years, which will be nostalgic for motorsport fans of any age. Putting our anoraks on, could we have a book now featuring useable stickers?

There's also a page detailing those who have died during a race meeting, including spectators and marshals, while the forward has been written by five-time grand prix winner John Watson.

Hill set out to make a book that was "interesting, clear and precise", which is exactly what he's achieved, and it would make a fine addition to any motorsport collection.

STEFAN MACKLEY



UK MOTORSPORT

Brands Hatch BARC

26-27 June

BTCC, British F4, Ginetta GT4 Supercup, Ginetta Junior, Mini Challenge, Porsche Carrera Cup

TV Live ITV3, Sun 1100

Silverstone BRSCC

26-27 June

British F3, British GT, Ginetta GT5 Challenge, Porsche Sprint Challenge

Kirkistown 500MRCI

26 June

Fiesta Zetecs, Irish FF1600, Irish Legends, Mazda MX-5s, Roadsports, Saloons/GTs, Superkarts

Donington Park HSCC

26-27 June

'70s Roadsports, Aurora Trophy, Classic FF1600, Guards Trophy, Historic F3, Historic FF1600, Historic FF2000, Historic Roadsports, Saloon Car Cup/Historic Touring Cars, Thundersports

Snetterton MSVR

26-27 June

116 Trophy, EnduroKa, Lotus Cup, MSV Supercup, Snetterton Saloons

Croft FOC

26-27 June

Alfa Romeos, DDMC Sports and Saloons, Ferrari Classic, Ferrari Club

Santa Pod British Drag Racing Championship

25-27 June

Funny Cars, Jet Cars, Top Fuel Dragsters





FINISHING STRAIGHT

FROM THE ARCHIVE

The two Spirit-Honda machines at the disposal of sole driver Stefan Johansson during the weekend of the 1983 European Grand Prix are displayed in the Brands Hatch pitlane. Johansson briefly drove the British squad's new 101/1 (foreground) in practice for the penultimate round of the season, but overheating issues meant nearly all his time was spent in the 201C/5. Things still didn't go smoothly as the Honda engine's fierce thirst meant the turbo pressure had to be dialled down, so the Swede struggled for race pace. Having qualified 19th of the 26 drivers to make the cut, he came home second to last of the 15 finishers, two laps down. It was to be the Spirit team's final appearance with Honda power, the Japanese manufacturer choosing to divert its energies to Williams.



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WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN

A return to the TWR Volvo team for 1999 is foiled by a quick, cheap Belgian

TIM HARVEY

Tim Harvey had finished fifth in the 1995 British Touring Car Championship in his single season with the TWR-run Volvo 850, but Kelvin Burt replaced him for 1996. That meant a move to Peugeot for Harvey, who spent three years at the struggling team before a recall from TWR for the 1998 Bathurst 1000, where he would share an S40 with Jan Nilsson.

This wasn't just a race; effectively it was an audition for a 1999 seat. While newly crowned BTCC champion Rickard Rydell and Jim Richards won the race, Harvey qualified the sister Volvo third, but crashed out on oil mid-race.

The Tom Walkinshaw-run team had replaced Burt with Gianni Morbidelli for 1998, but the Italian was well off the pace. "They realised that perhaps I was a bit better than they thought," recalls Harvey today. "In fact, I think they underestimated how good Rickard was — he and Alain Menu were the two fastest guys I ever raced in touring cars. Knowing how Tom worked, they liked to evaluate the goods if you like, and test them. I'd never driven that car before Bathurst and it went well."

Indications were that Volvo favoured two-time Swedish champion Nilsson for

1999, with TWR pushing for Harvey. It was the Brit who got the call-up for February's Michelin tyre test at Vallelunga when Rydell got his dates mixed up and booked a clashing family skiing holiday, and Harvey "did a ton of laps".

With BTCC supremo Alan Gow getting jumpy that TWR still hadn't nominated Rydell's team-mate, Harvey shook down the 1999 S40 at the Enstone airfield, as Vincent Radermecker entered the equation... The ex-British F3 star had been racing for Peugeot in Belgian touring cars, and he got the drive after a Pembrey test.

"You know in discussions when things go a little bit quiet," says Harvey. "The reality is I was probably a bit greedy with my demands, although I'd have accepted a little bit less to get the drive. Vincent came out of the blue; I know he was cheap and maybe Tom's tight-fisted ways came out! Vincent didn't do a bad job, but I thought I could have done better."

"I would have loved to have been in that S40 — it would have been absolutely fantastic. We're talking about the last two years of Super Touring, when the cars were at their absolute best."

MARCUS SIMMONS



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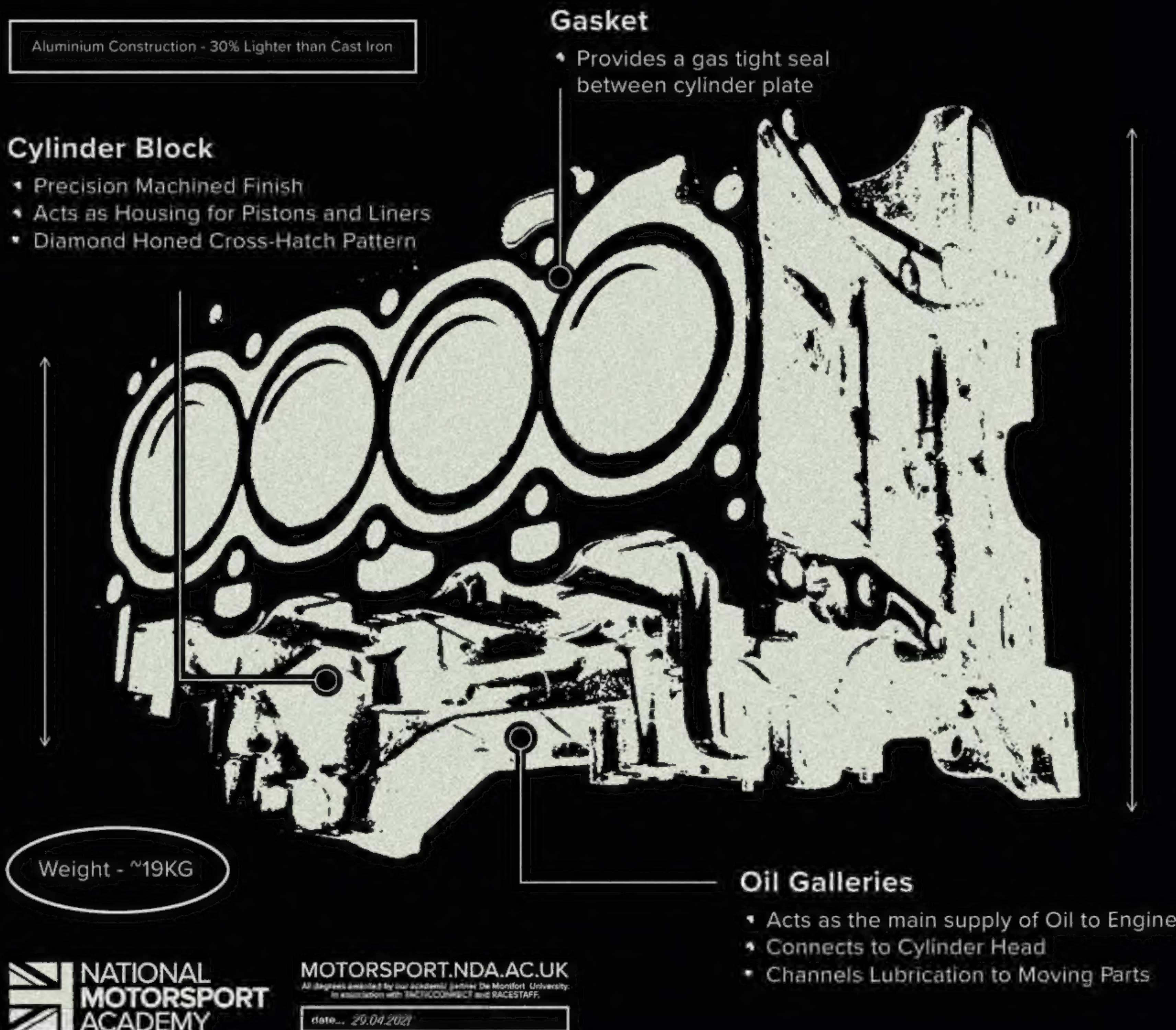
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